

The image shows the front cover of an old book. The spine, on the left, is made of a textured, light-colored material, possibly leather or cloth. The main cover area is decorated with a black and white marbled pattern consisting of repeating, wavy, shell-like shapes. A rectangular label is pasted in the center of the cover. The label has a thin border and contains the name 'CHARLES B. ALEXANDER.' in a bold, serif font. The label itself appears aged and slightly worn.

CHARLES B. ALEXANDER.

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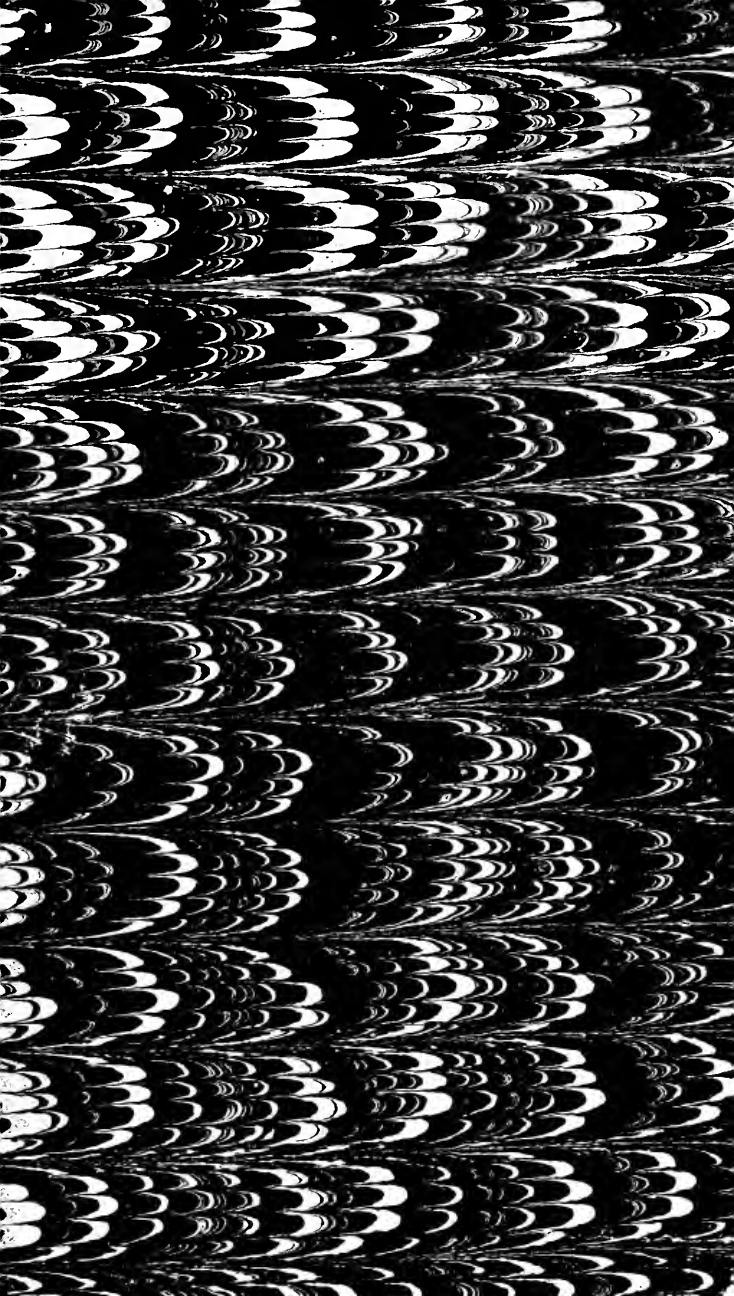


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Charles Clifford.



CHARLES CLIFFORD,

OR,

THE CHILDREN AT RIVER BANK.

BY

JAMES W. ALEXANDER, D.D.

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CHARLES CLIFFORD.

CHAPTER I.

RIVERBANK is the name of an estate upon the Delaware, not many miles from Philadelphia. There is a high bank rising many feet above the stream, but level at the top, and covered with green fields and woods. This bank has in the midst of it a large and elegant house, with a smooth lawn on each side. Not far from the house is a grove of old oaks, and when you drive up from the road, through the lawn, there is a

double row of elms. This makes a shaded walk on both sides of the carriage road, and the high elms join their branches at the top, so as to make it seem like an arch.

Riverbank was so called by its owner, because it was situated upon the very bank of the river Delaware. The gardens reach almost to the water's edge, and there are steps by which you may go down. At the bottom of these steps there are two small houses, which are touched by the water. One of these is for bathing, and the other is a boat house. From the high ground above you can see many miles up and down the river ; and in the fine summer evenings it is charming to sit under the

ncble elm-trees, and look at the farms, and woods, and hills along the river.

Riverbank was for many years owned by a gentleman named Captain Clifford. He was rich, and had chosen this pleasant spot to have a quiet place where he might bring up his little family. The house was well furnished with every thing that was necessary to comfort. Besides the fine parlours and chambers, there was a large room in the centre of the house, which was called the *library*. There were shelves around the walls, which were filled with the most elegant books. In the middle of the room were tables, on which lay the large books of maps and pictures,

which it was not proper to put on the shelves.

At one end of the library there was a door opening into a smaller room, which was called the captain's *study*. Here he read and wrote almost every morning. And here he used to have his little children, when he wished to teach them.

Mrs. Clifford was a pious and sensible woman. She was kind to all the family, and benevolent towards the poor. Her greatest pleasure was in teaching her little children, Charles and Mary. But Mrs. Clifford was much afflicted. All her husband's riches, and all their fine houses and grounds, could not keep away distress. She was feeble and

sickly, and there was hardly any day in which she did not suffer much pain.

But she knew that not a hair of her head could fall without the permission of God. She was, therefore, cheerful and happy in the midst of all her trials. Indeed, her pious friends used to say, that the more her strength failed, the more her joys seemed to increase. And it is certain that she was so far from murmuring at what the Lord chose to lay upon her, that she often used to say that she thanked God for her afflictions.

When little Charles Clifford saw his dear mother so pale and weak, it used to make him very sorry. The

affectionate little boy did not know that his mother was going into a consumption ; but he plainly perceived that something was the matter. Little boys often take notice of more than those who are around them suppose. Charles could see that his mother never walked out, and that she could scarcely get into the carriage without being helped. And then she lay upon the bed almost all day, and was often taking medicines, and had a cough which seemed to give her great pain.

On a fine spring morning, Mrs. Clifford was sitting by a window, where she could look out and see the boats upon the river. She had her Bible lying by her, in which she had

been reading. While she sat there, Charles came running in with a nosegay of flowers, and said, "Dear mother, see what a beautiful bunch of flowers I have got out of the green-house. Will you not come and walk in the garden? O, do, mother; the pinks are all coming up in the border, and every thing is so beautiful."

"My dear little boy," said Mrs. Clifford, "I am unable to walk out with you; I am too weak."

Charles. But, mother, what makes you so weak? Are you unwell?

Mrs. Clifford. Yes, Charles, I am very unwell. I do not think I shall ever walk out any more.

Charles. O, yes, mother, I hope

you will walk out a great many times. And when the new summer house is finished, we will all go and drink tea there ; and Mary says that her doll is to have a new frock, and to sit at the table.

Mrs. C. My son, do you try to remember all the good things I have been teaching you ?

Charles. Yes, mother, and I say the little prayers you taught me, and read in my little Bible every day.

Mrs. C. I hope you will always remember to do so, and never forget what your mother has taught you. I wish you and Mary to love God above all things. Every day, since you were born, I have prayed that

the Lord would bless you, and make you good children.

Charles. I wish to be a good boy, and to be like the Lord Jesus Christ.

Mrs. C. But if I should go away, and you should not see me for a great while, do you think you would remember the good things I have taught you?

When Mrs. Clifford said this, the tears began to come into her eyes; and little Charles drew very near to her, and looked very sorrowful. He then looked up into his mother's face, and said,

“Dear mother, you are not going away to leave me,—are you?”

Mrs. C. I cannot be always with you, my dear; and when I am gone,

you must remember how much I have desired that you should be the Lord's child.

Charles. Yes. I will, indeed; but where are you going, mother?

Mrs. C. You know, Charles, that we cannot live in this world forever. Some of these days we must all die, and go to another world. Do you know what death is?

Charles. O, yes! I saw the gardener's son, when he was dead. He was almost as white as snow, and when I put my hand upon his face, I was afraid, because it was as cold as marble.

Mrs. C. We must all die. My little son must die; your father must die, and *I* must die. But if

we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, we shall all meet again in heaven.

Charles. Yes, aunt Esther says that there will be no sorrow or distress in heaven forever and ever.

Mrs. C. Before a great while, every one of us will be dead. Our bodies will be laid under the ground ; but if we are the Lord's children, our souls will be in heaven.

Charles. Mother, I do not like to hear you talk so. I do not like to think that you and my dear father are to die.

Mrs. C. I do not wish to distress my little son, but you ought sometimes to think of these things. The time will come when we must part from one another for a little while.

And I think it is likely that I shall go away first.

When Charles heard this, he threw his arms around his mother's neck, and wept as if his little heart would break. And his mother wept too, so that it was some time before she could say any thing. At last Charles said,

“O, my dear mother, now I know what you mean by going away. You mean that you are going away to heaven. O, what shall I do! what shall I do! I will go and pray to the Lord to make you well. We cannot do without you. It would kill me, I am sure, if you were to die.”

Mrs C. Well, my child, we will

not talk any more of this. Only I hope you will never forget that your dear mother wished and prayed, above all things, that her little son and daughter might be pious children. I am sure that the Lord, who takes care of these beautiful flowers, will take care of my little children. Now wipe your eyes, and let me kiss you, and then you may go out to your sister, for I hear her calling you.

Charles kissed his mother, and then walked very soberly away to meet his sister under the elms. But he was so sorrowful that he could not play. Little rosy-cheeked Mary ran and skipped about the gravel-walk, like a lamb or a kid, she was

so full of spirits. She wondered what was the matter with Charles, and after she had found that he would not play, she ran away from him. Charles walked about very sorrowfully under the shade of the trees. He did not know very well what death was, and did not suppose that his mother was in so great danger. But he knew that it would be very dreadful for him to lose her, and he felt as if his affectionate heart would break.

Mrs. Clifford had spent much of her time in teaching her little boy and girl. And the more her strength failed, the more earnest she was that they should be instructed in religion, and be con

verted to God. Every morning and evening she used to take them into her closet, and kneel down, and pray to the Lord for them.

As Charles walked alone under the elms, he thought of this. He remembered how often his dear mother had told him that he must pray to God whenever he was in trouble. The poor little fellow was in trouble now; so he thought the best thing he could do would be to go by himself and pray. He went up-stairs into a room which was not occupied, and there he knelt down and prayed that God would bless his dear mother.

Now, it happened that Charles's aunt was sewing in a little apart-

ment near to this room, where she could hear what he said. This aunt was Miss Esther Clifford, an elder sister of Captain Clifford, who lived at Riverbank. Ever since Charles had been deprived of the particular attentions of his mother, he had been under the care of his aunt Esther. And he could not have had a better guardian, for she was sensible, and pious, and very kind. When Miss Esther heard the child praying for his mother, it affected her very much. She went, therefore, into her brother's study, where he was writing, and told him of what she had heard.

The captain laid down his pen, and said, "I did not know that

Charles supposed his mother to be so ill. Yet I am glad that it is so. The little boy will thus be better prepared for the dreadful stroke which I am afraid is coming upon us."

"O, brother," said Miss Esther, "what a blessed thing it is to have the consolations of religion at such a time. My dear sister grows weaker and weaker every day. To tell you the truth, I should not be surprised if she should expire some day in her chair. She tries to appear better than she is, for fear of distressing you. But in the midst of all, she is so sweet in her temper, and so full of Christian joy, that one cannot pity her. She is happier than any of us"

Captain Clifford covered his face with his hands, but his sister could see the tears trickling down his cheeks. So she took his hand in a kind manner, and said, "Brother, you know where to go for comfort and support. The Lord orders all these trials for your good, and I hope you are able to trust in his promise."

"Yes," said he, "I am! I am!—I am thankful that it is so. The trial is hard to bear, but my trust is in the name of the Lord. *He* will support me, and take care of these motherless children. Now, my dear, go and see if you can persuade your sister to lie down, and take something reviving."

The captain then opened his Bible, and began to read. And the young reader of this story will find, that if he is ever in deep affliction, the Holy Scriptures will give more real comfort than all other books put together

CHAPTER II.

SEVERAL weeks passed away, and Mrs. Clifford became every day more weak. At last she was entirely confined to her bed. And as she could not speak without pain, the little children were not allowed to go very often into her chamber. This made Charles grieve very much, for he now began to think that his mother would indeed be taken away from him; and even little Mary saw that something more than common was the matter.

Charles slept in a room up-stairs, in a small bed near his father's. One

morning, long before it was daylight, he was awakened by his aunt, who seemed to be weeping. As soon as he could get his clothes on, Miss Esther took him into his mother's chamber. There was a lamp burning in the entry, but the room was almost dark. Charles saw his father leaning over the side of the bed, where Mrs. Moore, the nurse, was holding his mother in her arms. Charles was shocked when he saw how ghastly his dear mother looked, and heard how hardly she breathed.

Mrs. Clifford was dying. She could scarcely speak ; but when she saw her son coming towards the bed, she stretched out her pale, thin hands, and seemed to smile. Charles

came near his mother, and heard her say, "*My son—my son, love and serve God—remember your dying mother's words—love and serve God!*" She could say no more, but sank back into the nurse's arms. Then she made a sign that she wished her son to come to the bed, and after Charles had kissed her cold lips, she seemed to fall into a kind of sleep. Her breath became shorter and shorter, and at last she lay quite still, with her eyes fixed as if they had been glass

Captain Clifford then motioned to his sister to take the little boy away. When she had taken him downstairs, he found Mr. Lee, the minister, sitting by the parlour fire. After Miss Esther had said a few words to

Mr. Lee, this gentleman took Charles on his knee, and, putting his arm kindly around him, said,

“Charles, do you know that your dear mother has gone to heaven?”

Charles said nothing, but hid his face in Mr. Lee’s bosom, and burst into tears. He sobbed and sighed so much, that it was long before he could attend to what the minister said. After a little while, Mr. Lee spoke to him thus :

“Yes, my little boy, your dear mother is now, I am sure, enjoying perfect happiness in the presence of God. I was sent for to see her in the middle of the night, and I talked and prayed with her. She said she was not afraid to die, because she

believed in Christ, and because she desired to be with him. And she wished that I would often talk to her little Charles and Mary, and put you in mind of what your mother had taught you."

Mr. Lee talked a good deal more with Charles, and then they knelt down, and Mr. Lee prayed that God would comfort the afflicted family.

I will not stop to tell about the funeral, and about the grief of every one in the house. It is enough to say, that the body of Mrs. Clifford was buried, and that when little Mary came to understand that she should never see her mother any more in this world, she would cry till she was quite sick. Every thing

appeared mournful at Riverbank for a long while after the death of Mrs Clifford. The servants went sadly about the house, and seemed to do every thing with sorrowful hearts. Captain Clifford never smiled, and spent almost all his time in his study, in reading and prayer.

Charles and Mary were greatly distressed; but the grief of little children does not last very long. It was not many days before Mary was jumping and running about the lawn and garden as usual. At times, indeed, she would see something which reminded her of her mother, and then she would weep bitterly. It was much longer before Charles became cheerful; and even after the violence

of his sorrow had passed away, there was scarcely ever an hour in which he did not remember his mother's last words to him. Captain Clifford used to talk a great deal to Charles and endeavoured to make him think of good things; and the little boy really seemed as if he was resolved to love and serve God.

A few weeks after the death of Mrs. Clifford, a note came to Riverbank, to say that Mrs. Lee, the minister's wife, would be glad to have a visit from Miss Esther and the children. The captain thought this very proper, as he was desirous that Charles and Mary should have some recreation; and he knew also that

Mr. Lee would teach them a great many good things.

The next morning, very early, the carriage was brought to the door; the trunks were tied on behind; the little folks were neatly dressed; and then they set off for Mr. Lee's. Mary was delighted with every thing that she saw, and asked her aunt a hundred questions. And Charles was pleased too, but every now and then he would think of the times when he used to go in the carriage with his dear mother, and this made him quite sober. At last Miss Esther asked him why he seemed so sorrowful. Charles was silent for some time, and then sobbed out "Because I have no mother!"

Miss Esther then tried to comfort the little boy. She told him that he had a mother still, that she was in heaven, and that if he was a good boy, he should see her again. She also told him that God would be his father, and would do every thing for him that he needed. She put him in mind of the way in which the Lord clothes the lilies, and takes care of the birds.

As they drove along, Miss Esther looked over a fence, and saw two sheep in the corner of a field. One of them was quietly lying down, while the other stood by it looking around. "See there," said she to the children, "do you not see how the Lord takes care of every living

thing? It is he who gives these innocent sheep every thing that is good for them. See how contented and happy they are. Now you may be sure that your heavenly Father will take care of you."

They began to approach Mr. Lee's house, and when they came near to his large gate, there he was, standing with his little daughter, ready to welcome them. The house was of one story only, but then it had a great many rooms. It was white, and there were vines running all over the sides. The court-yard before the house was filled with flowering plants and shrubs. On one side of the house there was a garden; on the other side was a large or

chard, with apples, pears, and peaches hanging on the trees. Behind the house was a green meadow, which descended gradually till it reached the little brook which ran along through the farm.

Mr. Lee conducted them all into the house. There was Mrs. Lee, sitting ready to receive them, and the children were jumping with joy at the arrival of the little visitors. In an arm-chair, by the window, sat old Mr. Carter, the father of Mrs. Lee; and a beautiful Irish greyhound was lying in the doorway. The day was spent very agreeably by the young people. Jane Lee showed them the way to the little brook, where they were delighted to see the

oright fishes sporting in the places where the water was still. They made little boats to sail in the stream, and played as children commonly do until it was time for dinner.

After dinner, Mr. Lee called the children all around him, and said, ‘My dear little friends, I make it a rule to let no day pass without teaching my children something. I hope our young visitors will not be sorry to learn something too.’

“O, no, sir,” said Charles, “we wish to learn very much.”

“Then I will tell you all how you may be happy as long as you live.”

“Yes,” said Charles, “that is what we all wish to know; we all desire to be happy. And I am not so happy

now as I used to be." Here the little fellow looked very sorrowful.

"I do not mean," said Mr. Lee, "that I can tell you how to keep from being in trouble. Every one has his troubles. Afflictions come upon everybody. The Lord sometimes sends trials upon those whom he loves best. Can any of you tell me what good man is mentioned in the Bible, who suffered great afflictions?"

Charles. David was often in trouble.

Mary. Poor Joseph was sold by his brethren.

Mr. Lee smiled, to see that little Mary understood so well what was meant. She had often heard from

her mother the story of Joseph; and she blushed when she perceived that she had answered aright.

Mr. Lee. Is there not another who was more distressed than either of these?

Jane Lee. Yes, sir; Job was grievously afflicted.

Mr. L. Mention some of the things which he suffered.

Jane. Robbers carried away all his oxen and his asses. Fire from heaven consumed his flocks of sheep. The Chaldeans took off his camels. All his servants were killed. And then his seven sons and three daughters were destroyed. All this fell upon Job in one day. Then he broke out with boils, over his whole body;

and what made it worse, his wife behaved very wickedly, and his three intimate friends reproached him, instead of comforting him.

Mr. L. Very well. Can you tell me of one who was much more holy than Job, and who was a great sufferer?

Charles. The Lord Jesus Christ

Mr. L. Yes, my children, the Lord Jesus Christ was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. And all that he suffered was for the sake of sinners. Now when we are in trouble, we should remember this, and it would help to make us contented.

Charles. But how can a person be happy in the midst of troubles?

Mr. L. If you were sure that God

loved you, and that you would go to heaven, would it not make you happy?

Charles. O, yes! I should be happy to think of seeing my dear mother again.

Mr. L. If you give your heart to God, and put your trust in the Lord Jesus, you will be supported in time of distress. God takes particular care of his dear children. When he afflicts them, it is for their good. They know that whatever befalls them is just as it ought to be. Nothing can happen that is not permitted by their heavenly Father.

Charles. I am glad to hear you talk so, sir; because I wish to know how to be comforted when I feel sorry.

Mr. L. You and your dear sister have been much afflicted. And now, my dear children, you must go and tell your sorrows to the Lord. He will hear your prayer, if you put your trust in him; I am sure that he will be a father to you.

Mr. Lee talked a long time to the children, and then sent them out again to their plays. They roamed through the farm, peeped into the birds'-nests, and ran about the orchard. They made baskets out of the rushes, and rode upon the gentle old pony. And when it became dark in the evening, they were so much wearied, that they were glad to retire to their chambers, where they soon went to sleep.



CHAPTER III.

It was more than a week before Charles and Mary went home. As long as they remained at Mr. Lee's, they were pleased and contented. Old Mr Carter used to take the children on his knee, and tell them amusing stories. One morning he bade little Charles come to him, and taking him up, said, "Child, look at these wrinkles in my old face; look at these gray hairs. Do you know what makes them?"

Charles. Yes, sir. I think it is because you are so old.

Mr Carter. Yes. I am seventy

five years of age. Once I was a little boy, like you, and when I used to hear people speak of the troubles of age, I did not believe what they said. But now I know that old age is full of trials. Look into my mouth; I have not one tooth. I am lame in one knee from the rheumatism, and I cannot hear what you say unless you speak very loud.

Charles. O, do you not wish you were a little boy again?

Mr. C. No, my child. It is painful to be old; but there are so many bad things in a long life, that I should not wish to live mine over again. I have this thought that comforts me: the older I get, the nearer I get to my home

Charles. Is not this your *home*?

Mr. C. This is my earthly home. But I mean my heavenly home. Before many days, I expect to go to my heavenly Father, and I am just waiting here until he invites me to come.

Charles looked very serious, and seemed to be thinking very earnestly about what Mr. Carter had said. The old gentleman took notice of this, and said nothing for some time, for he wished the little boy to consider what he said. At last he began to speak to him again.

“Charles,” said he, “if you wish to have a happy old age, begin to serve God *now*. Little boys often suppose they are too young to think

about religion, and so they put it off until they shall get to be men. And when they have grown up, they are so much taken up with worldly things, that they care nothing about religion."

Charles. O, sir, I think about these things very often. I wish to be a child of the Lord, for my dear mother told me to love and serve God. This was the last thing she ever said to me.

Here the tears began to run down the little boy's cheeks. Mr. Carter thought that he had said enough for the present, and therefore began to talk to some one else who was just then coming into the room.

Their visit had been prolonged

several days, and Miss Esther thought it was time to return. The little Lees were very sorry to part with their playmates, but Miss Esther promised to send the carriage for Jane, to come and pay them a visit. The carriage drove away, and the little folks kissed their hands and waved their handkerchiefs as long as they could see one another.

When they came within sight of Riverbank, Mary clapped her hands, and cried out, "Home—home—there is our dear home—now we shall see our dear father and——" She was almost about to say, "mother," but she remembered that she had no mother, and her countenance immediately became sad. Poor

Charles also was very sorrowful, for every tree and every flower put him in mind of what he had lost. But all these feelings passed away as soon as they drove into the avenue, under the elms, for whom should they see there but Captain Clifford, standing ready to welcome them, and help them out of the carriage. He took his children in his arms, and kissed them again and again. Then he led his sister into the house, where all the domestics hastened out to shake hands with the children. When they were gathered in the evening for family worship, Captain Clifford gave thanks to God for bringing

them all together again in health and safety.

Every thing went on at Riverbank in a very orderly way. In the morning, after the children had read in the Bible, and prayed in their own chambers, they came into the library. Here the family was collected, servants and all, for prayer. The Captain used first to read a chapter in the Bible; then they sang a psalm or hymn; and then they all knelt down, and he offered up a prayer to God. He used to say that the day always passed more pleasantly for being sweetened with prayer; and besides, that meeting together in this way for family worship made them love one another more.

After breakfast, the children came again into the library, when they learned a Scripture lesson. Then Mary went up-stairs to her sewing, in her aunt Esther's room, and Charles remained with his father, to attend to his studies. Every day the captain used to take them out to ride or walk, and wherever they went, he endeavoured to teach them something useful.

Charles and Mary were both intelligent, and as they grew up, they seemed never to forget what their mother had taught them. It would take me too long to tell every thing that happened. Riverbank was a peaceful, retired place. The children had no companions, and their

father and aunt took great care to teach them every thing that was good. They were healthy, and as they became larger, everybody who used to come to the house admired their sweet behaviour.

But what is better than all, these children began very early to fear the Lord. The dying words of Mrs Clifford sank into the heart of her son. Every day, for many months, he used to think of them, and pray to God that he might be taught how to obey them. He chose the Lord to be his God, and made up his mind to be the Lord's servant, and to love and follow Christ. Let my young readers think of this. Let them remember what a sweet, beautiful

thing it is for children to give their hearts to the Lord. It is just as proper for young persons to be religious as for old persons. Little Samuel was very young when he began to serve the Lord. And Christ is well pleased when children love him and trust in him.

Charles loved his sister, and thought, very properly, that as he was older than she, he ought to give her good advice, and set her a good example. It was a pretty sight to see this little boy and girl going hand in hand to Sunday-school. And then no one ever heard any cross words between them, for they knew that it is the will of God that

brothers and sisters should tenderly
love one another.

One of the first things which they had learned, was that they ought to honour their father and their mother. And after the death of Mrs. Clifford, the captain used to tell them that they must be as obedient and kind to their affectionate aunt, as they would have been to their mother. They used to be quick and ready in attending to the very first word of their father or aunt; and scarcely a day passed, in which they did not try to contrive some way to please these good friends.

They were also taught to be good to the poor. One blustering, windy day, in the spring of the year, when

Charles was quite a little boy, he was taking a walk with Mr. Lee. As they came to the edge of the orchard, they saw a poor old blind man, who was led by a dog. Mr Lee began to talk with him, and found that his eyes had been blown out by the bursting of a cannon. Charles felt so much pity for him, that he led him all the way to Riverbank, and begged his father to let him lodge there that night. And the next morning, he gave him food enough to last him several days.

But I cannot stop to tell of all that happened while they were little children. One year after another passed away, and Charles and Mary were constantly improving, and be-



coming more dear to their father. The captain took all the education of Charles into his own hands. But at length, the health of this kind father began to suffer very much, so that he could not teach the children any longer. He became very thin and pale, his voice lost its strength, and he was almost always coughing. When Charles perceived this, he was very much afflicted. He was now quite a stout boy, and he knew that something serious was the matter with his father. He remembered too that it was just in this way his mother was seized with the consumption. This alarmed him so, that he could hardly bear to think of it. He used to think thus: "O,

if my dear father should die, what would become of me ! I should then be an orphan indeed ! And what would poor Mary do !” Then he remembered what good Mr. Lee used to tell him about the afflictions of this life.

He used to go aside and pray earnestly, and this always made him feel more composed and cheerful. He found also a great many texts in the Bible which gave him comfort. He read where it is written, “ Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he will sustain thee.” “ Commit thy way unto the Lord, trust also in him, and he will bring it to pass.” And he felt sure that God would do nothing but what was right and merciful.

The health of Captain Clifford became more and more feeble, until at length the physicians said that nothing seemed likely to do him good, except a voyage to sea, or a removal for a time to some warmer climate. The captain thought so himself, and said that he would go and spend a year in the south of France, if he knew what to do with his children during his absence. Charles at once declared that he wished to go with his father, that he might wait upon him, and nurse him. But the captain said this would never do; because Charles was too young to be of much service, and besides, it was a very important part of his life, which he ought not

to lose by any means. He wished Charles to learn as much as he could, and the loss of a year's studies would be very great. But the captain had one reason for not wishing to take Charles, which he did not mention to any one but his sister. He did not think it likely that he should ever recover his health; and he thought it would be a dreadful thing for his child to be left an orphan in a foreign land, or upon the wide ocean.

Mr. Lee was sent for; and when he heard the case, he proposed another plan, which was, that Miss Esther should bring Mary to live at his house, and that Charles should be sent to a boarding-school, which

was kept by his brother-in-law, about seven miles distant.

Captain Clifford was sorry to send his son away from home; but he saw no other way, and so he consented. They agreed, therefore, that the house at Riverbank should be shut up, and that as soon as possible the captain should sail for Marseilles. As soon as this was determined on, every one became sad. The captain was grieved because he had to leave his dear family, especially as he did not think he should ever see them again. Miss Esther Clifford was sorry to part with her brother and with Charles. And it almost broke the hearts of the children to think

of being separated from their dear father and from one another. But the captain said, "The will of the Lord be done ! I trust my children love the Lord, and will endeavour to serve him. Charles has good principles, and will not forget his mother's last words."

After Charles had gone out of the room, Mr. Lee said, "I do not fear about Charles; he is a good boy, and will do well. He has fine health; he is a stout and manly fellow, and can ride and swim as well as a man. It will do him good to be away from home for a time, and I hope, when you return, you will see him greatly improved. Now let us kneel down,

and pray to God for his blessing on our plan."

So they knelt down, and prayed that the Lord would bless all the family during their separation.

CHAPTER IV.

It was a sorrowful day at Riverbank when Charles Clifford left home to go to Mr. Carter's academy. As he rode silently along, by the side of Mr. Lee, who accompanied him, many sad thoughts filled his mind. He thought of his father, and was much in doubt whether he should ever see him again. To divert his mind to other subjects, Mr. Lee began to give him some advice. He told him that there would be many things to tempt him, and that bad companions would try to make him do wrong. He told him that

he must seek help of God, for that he would now be exposed to greater dangers than he had ever been tried with before.

As they approached the end of their ride, Charles began to feel some agitation. Though he had been used to see a great deal of company at Riverbank, yet he had never been away from home for any length of time. He felt as if he was going out upon the wide world to shift for himself. And he lifted up his heart to God as he rode along, and prayed that he would direct his steps and preserve his soul.

The academy was a very large building, several stories high, standing in the midst of a green. At one

side of this green was the dwelling of Mr. Carter, the preceptor, and at the other side a low, brick building of one story; this was called the *school-house*, because the boys were here instructed, for the large edifice was taken up with lodging-rooms and the like. Mr. Lee took his young companion into the house, where they found Mr. Carter. Charles was rejoiced to find that a son of his good old friend at the parsonage was to be his preceptor; but he could not help shedding some tears when Mr. Lee went away, and left him by himself in a strange place.

Mr. Carter was very kind, and told him that as this was the first day of his coming to school, he

would not require any lessons, but that he might go in and out as he chose, so as to get used to the place. He also showed him the room where he was to sleep, and there was a row of beds along the wall for four or five other boys.

Every thing was new to Charles, and as young people are fond of novelty, he was much entertained. The hum and bustle in the school-room seemed very great, and the boys gazed and whispered when they saw the new scholar enter the room. And afterwards, when the whole crowd of frolicsome fellows turned out upon the green, and shouted and screamed and ran about with violence, he perceived that he

had got into new company. It pleased him to see that they all looked so happy, and he began to think that he should soon be quite at home.

The bell rang for supper, and the boys scampered and bustled into the dining hall.

Here a long table was spread, and the scholars were seated in rows. Charles was too much embarrassed to enjoy his meal, for the noise and confusion of so many was great, and every thing was different from what he had been accustomed to at home. After the meal was finished, the lads went into different rooms with their several tutors. Some delivered speeches, others read compositions,

and a few took lessons in drawing and music.

When this was done, they were called together again into a large hall for prayers, and then prepared to go to rest

When Charles went up to the room where he was to lodge, he saw that five or six boys were to sleep in the same place. They were rude and inquisitive, and asked him a great many idle questions. But what distressed him most of all was, that every one of them went to bed without any reading of the Scriptures, and without prayer. Now Charles had been taught by his dear mother never to lie down at night without having thanked God for the

blessings of the day, and asked his protecting care during the night. He looked about in vain for a private place, to which he might go by himself for this purpose. How different was this from Riverbank, where he had his own little room, with a chair, and table, and book-shelf. At last he sat down by the lamp which stood upon a bench, and read in the little pocket Bible which his mother had given him. Then he opened the door, and walked in the long entry. At one end of it was a window, into which the moon was shining very brightly. Here he knelt down, and earnestly prayed. He asked the Lord to bless his father, and sister, and aunt, and also that

he might himself be kept from falling into temptation.

In the morning Charles was up very early. Though it was quite cold, he went into the school-room by himself, and there read and prayed; and it made him feel happy to think that God was a friend who was always near him.

Before many days, he had become quite well acquainted with the ways of the school. He studied diligently and was the best scholar in his class. The teachers soon took notice that they had no occasion to watch Charles Clifford. He was always in his place at the right time. His books were always neat and in good order. And he was never whisper

ing or playing during the hours of study, as was frequently the case with the other boys.

One day a strange gentleman came in with his son, whom he had brought to the academy. As he was looking at the scholars, he stopped and said to Mr. Carter, "Who is that fine healthy-looking boy near the window? It seems to me that I have seen him before."

"That," said the preceptor, "is the only son of Captain Clifford, of Riverbank."

"Is it possible!" said Mr. Reynolds; "I am well acquainted with his father. I must speak to him." Mr. Reynolds then called Charles, and shook hands with him. He also

introduced to him his son Henry Reynolds, and said he hoped they would be friends. Charles was pleased with this, for he had very few acquaintances among the scholars.

It was very distressing to Charles to see how much folly and wickedness there was among the boys. Many of them seemed to have no regard for the truth, and were ready to say any thing, in order to deceive the teacher. And when they were at their sports, there were some of them who cursed and swore, and used other language of the worst kind. Every few days there was quarrelling and fighting among them, and every variety of mischievous tricks and pranks. Such things

gave Charles much pain. He saw that these boys had not the fear of God before their eyes, and that many of them were not only careless, but wicked. Though he was fond of play, yet he could not join with those who were profane in their language. There were a few who seemed to be quiet boys, but even these were often led into faults by the example of others, and because they were afraid or ashamed to do right. This made Charles think much of the advice which Solomon gives: "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not;" and also of our Saviour's words about those who are ashamed of him and of his cause.

The larger boys endeavoured to

get Charles to join them in their mischief, but he always refused. And he determined that he would be open and sincere, and always tell them the reason why he would not do what they desired. He was kind and polite to every one, and used to play with them at ball, and go with them to skate upon the frozen mill-pond. But when they asked him to help in any mischief, he would say, "No, I dare not, for it is wrong." He also used to reprove those who used bad language, or who told falsehoods; and this made several of them dislike him very much.

Charles tried for a long time to persuade the boys who lodged in the same room to read sometimes in the Bible.

but they would not be persuaded. One little fellow indeed consented to read with him, but he was laughed at by the others, and he had not firmness enough to do what he knew was right. And then, to show how bold he was, he joined with the rest in ridiculing Charles, whom they nick-named *the parson*. Charles was willing to bear their reproaches. He remembered that his blessed Saviour had been ridiculed and reproached, and he used to pray for those who laughed at him. In one of the books which his father had given him, he found a sentence which pleased him so much, that he copied it in large letters into the beginning of his writing-book. It was this : *No one*

ever became distinguished who was afraid of being laughed at.

He learned more and more what Mr. Lee meant, when he told him that he would be exposed to greater danger and temptations than he had ever known before. Sometimes he had sorrowful thoughts about home, and especially about his father, from whom he had not heard any thing. Yet he tried, in the midst of all this, to seek help from God, and he rejoiced that he had ever been taught to seek his favour.

CHAPTER V.

THE Bible teaches us to love our neighbour as ourselves, and every true Christian tries to do good to all around him. Charles Clifford desired to make himself useful, and, therefore, as soon as he found that there was a Sunday-school in the neighbourhood, he made a visit to it. The superintendent asked him if he wished to join the school, and Charles told him that he thought he should be able to instruct a little class of children, who were learning to read. So the superintendent gave him two little boys to begin with. They were

the sons of a fisherman, who lived on the banks of the river, about three miles off. He was much delighted with his business, and thought it one of the happiest hours in the whole week when he met his little scholars. But this was a new occasion for the ridicule of his playmates, and there was hardly a day in which they did not tease him about his Sunday-school.

All this time Charles was very diligently learning every thing which was appointed for him. He read Latin and Greek, and studied geography, history, and mathematics. He took care to write a beautiful hand, and also learned to draw. But what delighted him most of all, was

the study of the Holy Scriptures. He read the Old and New Testaments over and over, and used to commit a number of verses to memory every morning before breakfast. And in order to fix these in his mind, he had a paper book, in which he wrote down the passages of the Bible which appeared to him most important for his private use.

Miss Esther Clifford and his sister came twice to see him, and once he was allowed to go and spend a week at the parsonage. This gave him great pleasure, and he was gratified to see the improvement of Mary, who was growing up to be an intelligent girl, under the care of her good aunt. But there was one thing which

made them all very anxious. They had received one letter from Captain Clifford, written soon after his arrival at Marseilles in France; but several months had passed without their receiving any news about him. This gave Charles many sleepless hours. He fancied that his dear father had died in a foreign country, and this frequently made him weep, as he lay awake in his bed. But then he remembered the many precious promises which God has given to those who love him, and this filled him with peace. In particular, he often used to repeat to himself that precious passage in the 112th Psalm, where it is said of the believer: *He shall not be afraid of evil tidings; his heart is*

fixed, trusting in the Lord. And he knew that nothing could happen to his friends, or to himself, without the wise permission of his heavenly Father.

Let every reader of this little book pause, and think how good it is for young persons to love and fear God, and how much real comfort and nappiness there is in true religion.

CHAPTER VI.

THE Bible says, *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.* That is, all earthly things which are needful shall be given to those who try, first of all to honour and please God. There never was a person who really lost any thing, in the end, by being truly religious. It was so with Charles Clifford. Many persons would be ready to think that Charles would always be despised and disliked by his companions. And so he was for a time; but

afterwards they found how much they had been mistaken. The way in which this happened shall be related in this chapter.

During the winter season there was no amusement of which the boys were so fond as that of skating. Almost every Saturday afternoon, during the very cold weather, they used to spend in this manner. Twenty or thirty of them would sometimes be upon the ice at once, and they used to make parties for playing ball at the same time. The mill-pond was so large, that they could go up and down more than half a mile. There was no one in the school who could skate as well as Charles Clifford, and he was very

bald, as well as very active. On a certain day, when they were playing ball upon the ice, it so happened that all the skaters got together upon a thin place, and their weight was such, that the ice began to crack. Instantly there was an alarm given, "The ice is breaking! the ice is breaking!" Those who were nearest to the outside of the circle escaped as fast as they could, and almost all got away before the solid part gave way. But one of the boys, who was more rash than the rest, stayed too long; the ice broke through, and he immediately sank into the water. It was the same boy who had insulted and

struck Charles not many days before.

This is one of the most dangerous situations in which any person can be placed. For when ice begins to break in this manner, it is exceedingly dangerous for any one to approach the hole that is made, because the edges are usually so brittle that they break through with the weight of a human body. One of the best methods in such a case is to get a long board, or even a rail, one end of which may be laid upon the strong ice, while the person in the water can escape by means of the other end. This is generally known to boys who skate. Therefore, as soon as the accident took

place, Charles, who was nearest to the spot, cried out, "A plank—or a rail!—quick, quick—or he will be drowned." The boys ran as fast as they could, but nothing of the sort could be found. Poor Burke was entirely covered with water, with the exception of his head. He took hold of the edges of the ice repeatedly, in order to climb out, but it broke in pieces every time.

Charles saw that the lad would be drowned, unless something could be speedily done. He therefore called upon the others to help him. "Take hold of my ankles," said he, "while I creep near to the place, and let some others take hold of your ankles." Charles quickly

threw himself on his breast upon the ice, and crept towards the place where Burke had sunk. Two boys laid hold of his feet, while all the others held fast to the feet of these two boys. Thus a kind of chain was formed.

“Hold fast!” said Charles, as he seized Burke, and drew him out. This was not very easy, however, and Charles’s head and arms were several times under water. At length the poor dripping boy was dragged safely out, almost breathless, and much chilled. As soon as he could speak, he stretched out his hand to Charles, and said :

“Clifford, you have saved my life I thank you from my heart; and I

ask your pardon before all these boys for the manner in which I have treated you. I called you a coward; I take that back; I see you are no coward."

Charles smiled as he took his hand, saying, "I am glad, Burke, that you have changed your opinion of me. But I am still more glad, that I have a chance to show you that I have no spite against you, and that I am ready to do you any favour. I learn in the Scriptures, that I must love all around me; and it is in the same place that I learn not to fight."

"Well done, Clifford!" shouted the smaller boys; "Clifford is no coward." And from that time there

was no one in the school who was more respected than Charles. Boys very easily change their opinions, and some who had ridiculed him most were now the loudest in praising him. No one rejoiced in this change more than Harry Reynolds; for he had from the beginning respected Clifford, though he had not real courage enough to defend him when he was persecuted. When they were going home, Harry said, "Now I should like to know, Clifford, why you should be afraid of a few blows, when you are willing to risk so much more in taking a fellow out of the water."

"I am sorry," said Charles, "that you still think in the old way. Is it

possible that you believe there is no way of showing one's courage but by fighting? There is many a fellow who fights, and who is a great coward notwithstanding."

"How is that possible?"

"It is very possible," said Charles; "for some boys are afraid of being laughed at; and this is all that makes them fight. This is what *I* call cowardice. It is an easy thing to take a few knocks, but it is not so easy to bear the laugh and contempt of the whole school."

"That is very true," replied Harry; "and I often used to think that you suffered a hundred times as much, as if you had let Burke beat you soundly."

“I call it true courage,” said Charles, “when a person dares to do every thing that is right, and dares not do any thing that is wrong.”

“I never thought of that before,” said Harry; “but I believe you are right.”

When the boys got home, Burke took great pains to show how much he felt obliged to Charles; so that in a short time the whole school looked up to Charles, as one of the most many and honourable boys among them.

This was not the only case in which Charles Clifford had an opportunity of shewing his real courage. He was in truth a fearless

boy, and never shunned danger, when it was right for him to face it. There was one thing which kept him from being timid, and that was *a good conscience*. No one can be really brave who is afraid to think about his own soul.

One day, when Mr. Carter had given a holiday, all the boys of the school were roaming about in different parts of the neighbourhood. Some walked to the bank of the river, where the ice was coming down in great cakes. Others were hunting for rabbits in the woods, and a number of them went to the mill, to slide upon the pond, and amuse themselves with the boys of the neighbourhood. It happened

that a little lad had come on horseback to get a bag of meal. The horse was left standing without, tied to a post, while the boy was in the mill. Several of the scholars thought it would be a fine opportunity for them to take a ride. They therefore untied the horse, and helped a lively little boy, named Sam Cutter, to get upon his back. He did not intend to ride further than to the end of the lane, but as soon as he was mounted, the boys set up a shout, and Sam began to whip the horse with a switch that was in his hand. The horse became frightened, and ran with all his might. Poor little Sam was at best not much of a horseman, especially when he had no stirrups. Away

went the horse, and Sam cried again and again, "Help, help!" He caught fast hold of the mane, and tried to stop the horse, but it was all in vain. The animal seemed to know that his rider could not manage him, and very soon got through the lane into the main road. Here there were a number of the scholars, at different places, on both sides of the road. The horse passed rapidly between them, but none of them were bold enough to stop him.

Charles Clifford was at that time walking along the same road, and saw the horse running away. He placed himself near the middle of the way, waving his hat so as to stop the horse, and as soon as he came

near, he leaped towards him and seized his bridle. The horse gave a strong jerk, which threw Sam off, and knocked Charles down in the road ; but then he instantly stopped, and stood very quietly. Sam was more alarmed than hurt, but it was a wonder that he had not been killed. Charles led the horse back to the mill, and the boys all collected there very soon to hear the whole story. They were now convinced more than once that they were very wrong in thinking Charles a coward, and they saw that a person could be brave without being willing to fight. As they were walking home, Sam Cutter said to him :

“ Clifford, we used to think that

you were a coward, but now we know you are not. But then, you know we could not help thinking so, because you took all the blows that were given you without ever striking back."

"O, is that all?" said Clifford, "then I am as much a coward as ever, for I should act just so again. Why should I not? Can you give me any good reason why I should fight those who have never injured me?"

Sam hesitated, and then said, "But suppose they *have* injured you. Here is Burke, now; you know he *did* injure you, and struck you, and yet you never gave him a blow."

"It would be revengeful," said

Charles, "to return evil for evil, but revenge is wrong. The Bible says it is wrong. And, besides, what good would it have done me to strike him back? Would it have cured the hurt eye which he gave me?"

"Then you were not afraid of him," said Sam.

"Afraid of me " cried Burke, "no! I am very sure now that he was not afraid of me, and that he is stronger than I am. I believe Clifford's plan is the best, after all."

Charles smiled, and said, "I was *not* afraid of you, Burke, but I will tell you what I was afraid of; I was afraid of doing wrong. Do you not remember the anecdote of a distinguished French general, of whom it

is said, that on his death-bed he said to his children, *Fear God, my children, have no other fear.* And our Saviour said to his disciples, *Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*

When the boys found that Charles was beginning to talk about the Bible, they were silent, for most worldly persons do not like to hear conversation upon religious subjects; and this is a proof of the opposition of the heart to God and divine things. But Charles continued to give them good advice, and he said some things which made a number of them look very serious. Indeed,

he tried every day to lead his acquaintances to think about good things; and the boys had so much regard for him, that none of them would use any bad language where he was. Several of those who used to swear, gave it up entirely. Three of the larger boys agreed to go and try to be teachers in the Sunday-school. He found no difficulty now in getting the little fellows who lodged in the room with him to read several chapters in the Bible every day. And all this made Charles Clifford a happy boy. He found out in this way, how much better it was for him that he had not yielded to temptation; even though he had suffered for a time.

Thus we see that the true character of a conscientious boy will be found out sooner or later, and that the Lord will raise up friends for those who serve him. *If a man's ways please the Lord, he will cause even his enemies to be at peace with him.*

CHAPTER VII.

WHILE we are in this world, w must expect to have afflictions Therefore the Scripture says, *Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all.* Charles Clifford knew this, and often used to pray that he might be prepared for whatever his heavenly Father chose to lay upon him. He had already had some trials. It was a trial for him to part with his affectionate father, and also that he should be so long without hearing any thing from him. Sometimes he used to feel almost sure that his father was

dead. And the only comfort he had at such hours was in casting his cares upon the Lord. It was not long before a severe affliction really came upon him.

When the spring began to open, Mr. Carter determined to take some of the larger boys with him, on an excursion upon the river. They chose a fine warm morning in March, and engaged a sail-boat. They had their fishing-rods, and baskets of provision, and set off in high spirits. The river Delaware is quite wide at this place, and deep enough for large vessels. And at this time it looked somewhat rough, for the wind seemed to be rising. Still, Mr. Carter thought they might safely venture out, espe-

cially as the man who owned the boat went with them.

For some time their little voyage was very pleasant, and the scholars were delighted with every thing they saw. At last, however, the wind rose so much that the boys could scarcely sit upright in the boat; and as they did not take care to preserve the proper balance, there came a squall of wind, which turned the boat suddenly over. It was a mercy that they were not drowned; but it so happened that they were near the shore, where the water was not very deep. They were all soaking with water, and had to ride home in their wet clothes.

The next day, when Charles came

up to say his lesson, the tutor observed that he seemed to shiver, and said to him,

“Are you cold, Charles?”

“Yes, sir,” said he, “I am afraid I have a chill.”

The tutor sent him to the fire, but he continued to be so cold, that at last it was thought proper that he should go to bed. After a while the chill ceased, and he became very hot and thirsty. His cheeks were exceedingly red, and he complained of pain in his temples. The truth was, he was seized with a fever in consequence of the wetting which he had got the day before.

As soon as Mr. Carter perceived that Charles was really ill, he had

him removed to a chamber in his own house, where he would not be exposed to the noise, and where Mrs. Carter might attend upon him.

His fever rose so much that they thought it proper to send for Doctor Dobson in the night. After bleeding, he felt better for a time, and the physician left medicines to be taken during the night.

Charles knew that he was very ill, and he tried all the time to be lifting up his heart to God, and praying for grace to help him in this time of need. For a time he was alarmed, as most young persons are when they are sick ; but then he remembered the promises in the Bible, and felt sure that the Lord would take care

of him. He thought of that verse in the forty-first Psalm: *The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing ; thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness ;* and this gave him much comfort.

The boys of the school were very much concerned when they knew he was sick, for all of them now respected him. Several of them used to attend upon him ; and as he got worse, rather than better, Burke, and Cutter, and Reynolds sat up with him several nights. As he lay awake one night in great pain, the thought came into his head that he might perhaps do some good to his young schoolfellows. He therefore called to Burke, and said,

“I wish you would bring your chair near my bed, for I wish to talk with you.” When Burke came near, he asked, “Do you not see that I am very sick?”

Burke. Yes, Clifford, I am sorry to see you suffer so much, but I hope you will be better in a few days.

Charles. Ah, Burke, life is very uncertain, and I feel that I am much worse than I was. I begin to think it very likely that I shall die.

Burke. O! do not talk in that way. I hope you are not so ill as that.

Charles. I do not wish you to think that I am afraid to die. I thank God that I am not. I think I put my trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, and I have a strong hope that

if I die I shall be forever happy. Now, would *you* not be alarmed if you thought your death was near?

Burke. Yes, indeed I should. I confess I have a great fear of death, and whenever I am sick, it alarms me very much.

Charles. Yet you are not sure of life for a single day. O, my friend, it is high time for you to think of these things. Do you ever consider what would become of you, if you should die?

Burke. Why, to tell the truth, Clifford, I have not attended to religion as much as I ought.

Charles. I beg you to begin now I am afraid you never pray. I never see you reading your Bible. I entreat

you to think more about the concerns of your soul. Now promise me that you will seriously think about what I have said.

This conversation made Burke feel very sober, and he promised Clifford that he would attend to the subject in earnest. Charles also requested that in the morning there should be a messenger sent to Mrs. Lee, to inform his aunt of his illness.

The reader will remember that after the departure of Captain Clifford, Miss Esther took little Mary to the parsonage. Here she spent her time principally in giving instruction to her niece. They were very happy in Mr. Lec's family, and

Mrs. Lee and her two daughters did every thing in their power to make them comfortable. Miss Clifford was very fond of the garden, and used to take Mary out often to examine the different sorts of plants, as they came up in the spring. On a fine morning, all the ladies of the family were out in the garden, and Miss Clifford was explaining to Mary the nature of some flowers which they saw there. Mary was very much pleased with the flower, because she said her brother Charles used to be fond of the same. This put her in mind of Charles, and she began to talk of him.

“O,” said she, “how I do wish to see my dear brother Charles!”

Just then a servant came to say that there was a man on horseback, at the gate, who wished to speak with Miss Clifford. The man had a note from Mr. Carter, which informed her of Charles' illness, and requested that she would come to his house as soon as possible. She carried the note immediately to Mr. Lee, and he said that he would accompany her in the course of an hour. There was great sorrow in the whole family, and even old Mr. Carter, who was now unable to leave his bed, spoke of Charles, and said that he remembered the little boy who used to sit on his knee, and ask questions.

It was long before the carriage

was ready, and early in the afternoon, Mr. Lee, Miss Clifford, and Mary arrived at the academy. Mr. Carter received them very kindly but said that it would not be right for them to see Charles at that time, for his fever was very high, and it would injure him to be agitated by the sight of his friends. He told them plainly that he thought Charles was very ill. This made little Mary burst into tears, and all of them were much grieved. Mr. Lee was the first who was permitted to go into the room. The windows were darkened, and every thing was still and solemn.

Charles lay very quiet in his bed except when he would occasionally

sigh from pain. Mr. Lee went up to him, and said,

“My dear Charles, I have come to see you; but you are too weak to talk much, and so you must say very little.”

“O, sir,” said Charles, “I am very, very glad to see you. I am ill indeed, and I wish you to talk to me.”

“I hope you are at peace in your mind, my dear Charles.”

“Yes, sir, I think I ought to be very thankful. I know that my life is in danger, but I am not afraid. I have put my trust in the Lord.”

“But have you not been a sinner Charles?”

“Yes, sir, a great sinner; but the

blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. And I hope God will pardon me, and accept of me for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ."

"I rejoice to hear you say so," said Mr. Lee; "you cannot trust too much in the Saviour. But are you not anxious to get well?"

"Sometimes I greatly desire to recover, especially to see my dear father once more; but I think I feel willing that the Lord should do with me just as he pleases. I am sure it would be a great deal better for me to be in heaven than to be here."

"Now, my son, you must not speak any more. I have often been pleased to see that you remember your Creator, and I trust you are the

Lord's child. Now, *whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.* These afflictions are intended for your good. I hope you will recover, and that this will be for your good as long as you live."

"I hope, sir," said Charles, "that you will pray with me before you go."

"Certainly," said Mr. Lee; "but what do you wish me to pray for?"

"Pray that I may be resigned to the will of the Lord, and that my affliction may do me good. And pray that I may be prepared to die, if it is the will of God."

Mr. Lee knelt down and offered up a prayer, and then rose up softly

and went out of the room. Charles was so greatly comforted by this, and by the sweet thoughts which filled his mind, that it seemed to him that he was happier on his bed of sickness than he had ever been while he was in health.

The next morning he was allowed to see his aunt and sister for a very few minutes; but it was almost too much for him. Yet he seemed to get better from the time that these good friends came to see him; so that the doctor very soon pronounced him to be out of danger. Miss Esther and Mary Clifford remained at Mr. Carter's until Charles was able to ride out, and Mr. Lee came every few days to visit him. As soon as

ne gained sufficient strength, they removed him to the parsonage, where he rapidly amended. But it was many weeks before he was entirely well, and it was sorrowful to see the poor fellow walking feebly about the house, thin and pale, and scarcely strong enough to lift a chair from the floor.

Charles used to say, however, that it was good for him that he had been afflicted, and that he had learned more during his sickness about the comforts of religion, than he ever knew before. The conversation of Mr. Lee was very pleasant and useful to him, and he was delighted to have once more the company of his aunt and sister. Still, nothing was

heard from Captain Clifford, and none of them could avoid feeling very gloomy at times on account of this. There was a war going on in Europe at this time, and they used to fear that he had fallen into the hands of enemies. But old Mr. Carter, who had been much in Europe, told them that in time of war a great many things might happen to prevent the sending of letters, even though Captain Clifford should be well and happy.

At length Charles entirely recovered his health and strength. Indeed, it seemed to his friends that he looked more fresh and robust than he had done before. So that every

thing that happened to him appeared
to be kindly ordered for the best, by
an all-wise Providence

CHAPTER VIII.

By the time that the summer weather had fairly come, Charles Clifford felt ready to return to his studies. But then the summer holidays came round, and so he had to wait a month longer. Harry Reynolds had been several times to see him, and begged that he would go with him to his father's house, in Philadelphia, for a few weeks. And one morning Charles looked out of the window, and saw Mr. Reynolds carriage standing there. His friend Harry jumped out, ran into the par

sonage, and without waiting to speak to any one else, said,

“Now, Clifford, father has sent the carriage for you, and you cannot refuse.”

“I should like to go very well,” said Charles; “but I am under Mr. Lee’s care, and you must apply to him.”

Harry went into Mr. Lee’s study, and asked him very respectfully if he would permit Charles to pay him a visit. He also showed a note from his father, expressing a strong desire that Charles should spend a few weeks with them in Philadelphia. Mr. Lee at once consented, and said that if Harry would stay there that

day, Charles should be ready to set off very early the next morning. But before Charles could consent to go away, he thought it proper to take a ride to Riverbank, in order to see the old servants. He went alone, and on horseback, and took a few presents with him.

When he came in sight of the house where he was born, the tears came into his eyes. A thousand things rushed into his mind, which he had forgotten for years. There was the lawn on which he had amused himself so often; there was the garden full of a hundred beautiful plants; for the gardener and his family occupied the kitchen at R

verbank. There was the beautiful river flowing along, as bright and rapid as ever, and the rows of arching elms above the avenue. As he drew near his father's grounds, he stopped by the side of a hedge to take a better look. He cast his eyes down, and saw a rabbit and a pheasant lying dead at the root of a tree. He could not help feeling a sort of attachment even to the little animals which had lived at Riverbank, and it seemed a pity that they should be shot. But these thoughts soon passed away, and he began to look round to see who the sportsman was; for he knew it was likely that some of his father's friends were shooting

there. Just then he cast his eyes
ver into the meadow, and spied his
ld friend Roger the gardener, with
his dog Ponto, and his gun, just
ready to shoot. Charles waited til'
he had fired, and then called to him.

“Why, Master Charles!” said
Roger, “it does my old eyes good to
see you ; why, how you have grown !
And how well you ride that spirited
horse ! You are almost a man now.
And when did you hear from your
good father ? How glad my old
woman will be to see you !”

Thus the old man ran on, not
waiting for an answer, until Charles
began to inquire about his old nurse,
who was the gardener’s wife. Roger

called his little grandson Tom, who, he said, was now a ferryman, and Charles gave the boy a shawl for his grandmother, and sent her a kind message. Then they walked over the fields and meadows, and down to Riverbank. Roger took him into the garden, and showed him trees which he had planted with his own little hands. Then they went into the house, and Charles entered every room. All was clean, and neatly kept; but it was very gloomy. The beautiful rows of fine books in the library gave him more pain than pleasure, because they reminded him of his absent father. And when he went into the study, where he had

taken so many delightful lessons, sitting on his father's knee, he was quite overcome. He sent Roger away, and took this opportunity to kneel down in the silent room, and pour out a heartfelt prayer to God, for his beloved parent. After this he again strolled through the grounds.

When the gardener's grandson took the shawl which Charles had sent to the old nurse, she was more delighted than she knew how to express.

"It is very kind in Master Charles," said she, "to think of his old nurse; and I hope the Lord will reward him."

Charles saw all the old servants

who remained, and then found it so late that he had to hasten back to the parsonage, in order to be ready for his visit to Philadelphia.

The next day the young gentlemen set off on their little journey, and arrived at Mr. Reynolds' in the evening. Mr. Reynolds and his whole family gave Charles a cordial welcome. He was surprised to see the splendour of every thing about the house, and began to think that they must be very rich people. After a good night's rest he arose full of curiosity to see the great city.

When he came down-stairs in the morning, he found every thing prepared which he would wish to make

him comfortable. But it astonished him to see that there was no reading of the Bible, and no family prayers. And when they sat down to breakfast there was no blessing asked upon their food, and no thanks returned afterwards. Charles perceived that he had come into a family where religion did not govern. He therefore expected temptations, and began to be much on his guard. "I must take care," thought he, "how I behave, for they will judge of religion very much by my example." Harry had told them that Charles had some odd notions about religion, but Mrs. Reynolds said,

"Never mind, he has not seen the

world yet, and we shall soon laugh him out of that."

It is not necessary here to set down how many days were spent by Charles in seeing all the curiosities and wonders of Philadelphia. The family of Mr. Reynolds were all ready to show him every thing that was to be seen, and for more than a week the carriage was going almost every day. The very streets and buildings, the walks and public squares, were new and beautiful in Charles' eyes. And when he walked out at night, the brilliant windows of the tradesmen and the long rows of lamps seemed to him quite a show. He went to see all the

great public buildings, and also examined the various manufactories. He went on board of the packet ships which go to England, and also the large vessels of war at the Navy yard.

When they had surveyed all these things, they spent a day or two in looking at the curiosities in the Museum, and the paintings of the Academy of Fine Arts. They also rode out to the Water-works at Fairmount, and enjoyed the lovely prospects in that neighbourhood. And they visited the various public gardens and green-houses, the Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb, the House of Refuge, and the Prisons.

But it would be tedious for me to mention the various objects which he went to see, especially as I cannot stop to describe them all. Charles was truly glad that he had come to the city, for he found that he learned more by actual sight than he would have got by description in years.

There was one thing, however, which took away a great deal from the pleasure which Charles might otherwise have enjoyed, and that was the appearance of carelessness and irreligion among all this family. Charles did not see any thing while he was there to show him that they were not heathens, or Mohamme-

dans. There were no prayers, no religious conversation, and all the time he was there he did not see a Bible, except his own. Mr. Reynolds was a kind, generous man, but he was devoted to his riches, and very often took the name of God in vain. The young ladies appeared to think of nothing but balls, and parties, and plays; and they wondered that Charles should take so little pleasure in what delighted them so much.

On the first Lord's-day after Charles came, Mr. Reynolds gave a large dinner party; and as a compliment to Charles, he invited the sons of several of the gentlemen to

accompany them. This greatly distressed the person whom Mr. Reynolds meant to please. He had been accustomed to consider the Sabbath as a sacred day, and had never used it either for labour or amusement. Yet he did not think it would be right for him to stay away entirely from the company, lest they should charge his conduct to wrong motives. He behaved quietly and politely at the dinner table, and as soon as he could, slipped away and went to church, where he heard an instructive sermon. And, O! how much happier he felt, sitting in an obscure corner of a strange church among a num

ber of poor people, than at Mr Reynolds' rich entertainment, where he saw that they were profaning the Lord's-day by idle merriment. When he returned, the family all endeavoured to ridicule his precise notions; but they found that he was not to be changed by ridicule, and that it was not so easy as they thought to answer his reasons.

Charles went once with them to the theatre, but he declared that he would never go again.

“O!” said Miss Lucy Reynolds, “do you not know that the theatre is a *school of morals*?”

“I know,” said Charles, “that it is a *school of vice*.”

“O shocking! Mr. Clifford, how can you think so?”

“Because, when I was there last night, I heard things said upon the stage which I would not suffer any one to say in this drawing-room. And I heard the sacred name of God taken in vain many times. I also saw among the audience, behaviour which convinced me that it was not a proper place for a moral person.”

In the same way Charles argued against the card-parties which they used to have at Mr. Reynolds' house. They endeavoured to persuade him to play, but he would not. He told them plainly that he

thought it was wrong ; that it led to gambling, and that he knew he should displease God by joining with them. At last they ceased to argue with him any longer, saying that he was so obstinate and precise it was in vain to reason with him Charles replied,

“I am very willing that you should reason with me ; I am sure I wish to do whatever is reasonable.”

Mrs. Reynolds. Yes, but you are so perverse and old-fashioned. Your notions would make us all as solemn and dull as a parcel of monks.

Charles I do not know how solemn *monks* may be ; but I am

not for dulness. And I appeal to you all, whether my spirits are not as good as those of any one here. I may be old-fashioned, for I make it a rule to follow a very old book called the Bible, which I fear is not much in fashion.

Miss Lucy. But, Master Charles, where does the Bible say that it is wrong to go to the theatre, and to attend balls, and to play cards?

Charles. The Bible everywhere teaches me that vain and idle words and actions are wrong. It tells us that whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, we ought to do all to the glory of God. Now, I do not think we can do any of these things

to the glory of God. And when we all come to die, it will give us very little pleasure to look back, and think how much we have danced, and played cards, and listened to idle plays at the theatre.

Mrs. R. O, sir! If you are beginning to preach about death, and so forth, we shall change the conversation.

Charles. I ask your pardon, madam, if I have said any thing to offend you; but as we all have to die, and that before a great while, I thought there might be no harm in sometimes thinking about it.

Miss L. It is bad enough, indeed, to talk in this way. Why, if I let

myself think much about such horrible things, I should be afraid to go into a dark room, or to be alone. It is enough to make one melancholy

Charles. I think very often of these horrible things, as you call them, but I am not afraid to be alone, neither am I melancholy. And, Miss Lucy, we must think of these things some time or other, if we are ever prepared to die.

Mrs. R. Pshaw ! Are we not told that God is merciful ? It is time enough yet. When we are taken sick, we may call to God for mercy.

Charles. Ah, madam, very often people die who have no time to call for mercy. It is true, God is merciful.

ful, and he shows his mercy in sparing us so long, and giving us so many opportunities. But if we neglect them all, it will be very just in him to cut us off suddenly.

Mrs. R. Now let us stop. For, to tell the truth, I am not pleased with this canting way of talking.

So they changed the subject; but Charles felt that he had done what his conscience directed, by talking in this sincere manner. And it was wise for him to do so, on another account. For if he had not given the real reason why he did not join them in their worldly amusements, but had stated some other cause, they might have removed this cause,

and then he would have had nothing to say. Many young persons are ashamed to say that they are kept from dancing or card-playing by the fear of God; they make other excuses for not joining their giddy friends; and thus they are either led into temptation, or very much mortified in the end. The proper way in such a case, when we are tempted to do wrong, is to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

In the midst of all these things, every one of the family admired Charles for his manly frankness and sincerity. They saw that he was conscientious, and that nothing

would tempt him to do what he thought wrong. They also saw that he was happy ; indeed, that he was much more uniformly cheerful than any of them ; and sometimes they could not help thinking that it would be better for them all if they thought just as Charles Clifford did.

But the holidays were drawing near their close, and the boys set off several days before they ended, to spend a short time at the parsonage. After which they went on to the academy, and engaged once more in their studies.

CHAPTER IX.

THE whole care of Charles Clifford's education was committed to Mr. Lee. He had examined his young friend, to discover how much he had learned, and was persuaded that it would be proper to remove him from Mr. Carter's academy at the end of the year.

When Charles returned, there was a general joy in the whole school. Every one was glad to see him so ruddy and strong. And both teachers and scholars were pleased at the return of the best boy in the school. As



for Charles himself, he also was gratified to get back to a place where he might improve in learning. He was still industrious and benevolent, constantly endeavouring to make those around him happy.

As he was walking out one day in Mr. Carter's garden, he heard an exclamation of distress from the foot of a large tree. On looking in that direction, he saw a white pigeon, which seemed to have just escaped from a basket. George and Kitty, the children of Mr. Carter, were on the grass near the tree. Kitty had foolishly opened the basket, while her brother lay asleep, and was vainly stretching out her hand after the bird.

“There now,” said George “I had such a pretty pigeon to give you, and I just fell asleep under the tree, when you came and let it fly away. O, what a naughty, inquisitive girl you are!”

“Come, come,” said Charles, “I can give you as many pigeons as you want; this loss need not trouble you.”

“Yes,” said George, “but father says that Kitty has too much curiosity, and she is always prying into what does not belong to her.”

“It is certainly wrong,” said Charles, “but you should not speak more of it; for Kitty is sufficiently punished by losing the pretty pigeon.

But if you will come with me, I will show you something much prettier than the pigeon."

The children sprang up, and taking hold of his hands, walked with him till they came to the bank of the stream which runs at the bottom of the garden. As soon as they came near, Kitty exclaimed,

"O, Mr. Clifford! what a beautiful, beautiful boat! Pray whose is it?"

George also said,

"It is perfectly new. I never saw it before. The paint is bright and glossy. What a pretty red and green! And see the oars have never been used."

Kitty. What is that white cloth for ?

Charles. It is an awning to be spread over the boat, to keep off the sun.

George. Do tell us whose boat it is.

Charles. Cannot you read those gilt letters on the stern ?

George. O, yes. I did not see them before.

THE ACADEMY BARGE.

Charles Now read what is painted on the front part.

George. PRESENTED TO MR. CARTER BY HIS GRATEFUL SCHOOL.

Charles. The boys of the school

have all put their money together, and have bought this little boat for your good father. He often wants to cross the creek, and it will be very pleasant in summer-time to row up and down the stream. Now, suppose you get in, and let me row you a little way.

Accordingly the little children got into the skiff, and Charles took the oars, and rowed them along. It was charming weather, and every thing was green and lovely. The fish darted by them with their scales sparkling in the sun. The swallows flew about in circles, and skimmed so near the water as to touch it with their wings. On both sides of the

stream there were wild roses and honeysuckles; and in some places the grape-vines hung over the water, laden with fruit. When the sun became a little warmer, Charles rowed along the shady side, where it was delightfully cool. The children could reach out and pull the water-lilies, and look into the bird's-nests in the branches near the water's edge. They also heard the thrush, and cat-bird, and robin, and wood-lark singing among the leaves. The scent of the woods and clover-fields was very pleasant; and every now and then they came to an open place, and could look away off at the meadows, and farms, and

groves. The children were charmed with every thing they saw, and at last asked Charles where he was going to take them.

“If we were to keep on,” said Charles, “we should at length reach the Delaware river; but we do not wish to go so far. So I shall take you back again.”

George. We are much obliged to you for this nice little ride.

Kitty. O, it is delightful! The woods, and flowers, and every thing look so sweet. It makes me very happy.

Charles. Do you know who it is that makes all these things so beautiful?

George and Kitty. It is God.

Charles. And is it not He who has given you eyes to see all this, and made you able to enjoy it?

George. Yes, sir.

Charles. And is it not God who has given you all the good things you have in the world?

Kitty. Yes, sir. It is God who gives us our father and mother, and our food and clothes, and every thing.

Charles. Then, if God does all this for you, I am sure you ought to love him with all your heart.

George. Yes, we ought indeed to love God. Mother tells us so every day.

Charles. Your mother is a kind

woman. She nursed me kindly all the time I was sick, and I shall never forget it. You must take good care to do whatever your mother tells you. And you ought to be thankful to God that you have parents who can teach you what is good.

Kitty. Have you got a mother, Mr. Clifford?

Charles. I had a mother, my dear, but she is in heaven.

Kitty. O, is she dead?

Charles. Yes, she is. I remember very well when she lay upon her dying bed. She said something to me which has done me a great deal of good. I have never forgotten her words.

George. Pray, what did your mother say, Mr. Clifford?

Charles. She said, "My son, love and serve God; remember your dying mother's words,—love and serve God."

Kitty. Did she never say any more?

Charles. No; she died directly afterwards.

Kitty. Have you any father, Mr. Clifford?

Charles. I have no father in this country; and I do not know where my dear father is.

Kitty. Does it not make you very sorry to think you have no father and mother to talk to?

Charles. Sometimes I feel sad, but the Lord always takes care of me, and keeps me from distress. And if you will trust in God, he will never leave you, nor forsake you. But see there; we have got almost back to the foot of the garden; and now we must go up to the house, for fear your mother should be anxious about you.

It was in this way that Charles was constantly endeavouring to do good. He was never so happy as when he was instructing those who were younger or more ignorant than himself. And he had the pleasure of seeing that his efforts were not entirely useless. For several of the

school-boys became quite serious, in consequence of his conversations. In particular, Burke, whom he had saved from drowning, listened to what he said, and became a very diligent reader of the Bible. This change took place from the time when Charles was sick, and talked with him.

Burke came one day into the garden, where Charles was reading under an arbour, and said to him,

“Clifford, I believe I am one of the most wretched fellows alive ”

Charles. Why so, Burke?

Burke. Why, to tell you the plain truth, I am thinking what will become of my soul.

Charles. I think it time you should be so. But I dare say you know where relief is to be found.

Burke. One thing I know, indeed; that is, that I am a miserable sinner. I am sometimes almost afraid to go to bed at night. And I am alarmed when I look back at my past life. I have had kind parents, good teachers, and every want supplied; but how have I repaid my Maker? I have forgotten him, resisted him, taken his holy name in vain, and profaned his Sabbaths.

Charles. I know, my friend, that there is real cause for you to mourn; but—

Burke. When I think of God's

goodness, it cuts me to the heart. It is even worse than thinking of his anger. I see that it would have been right for him to cast me away in my sins. I see my vile ingratitude. I see that I deserve to be forever punished.

Charles. But is it not your desire to serve God?

Burke. (Weeping.) I have tried, I have tried. I have prayed and read, and made resolutions; but the more I try, the more I see of the wickedness of my heart. I have given up all hopes of making myself holy. And I am trying just to lie at the foot of God's throne, to let him do with me as he will.

Charles. My dear friend, do you not hate sin, and desire to be delivered from it?

Burke. I do, I do! O, it seems to me as if I would give worlds, if I had them, to be made pure and like to God.

Charles. Remember that *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

Burke. When I think of the Lord Jesus Christ, it only makes my sins seem so much blacker; for I have rejected his offers so many times, that I am afraid now he will not receive me.

Charles. That is doubting his word. *Him that cometh to me, says he, I will in no wise cast out. Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.* This is true; for it is the declaration of God.

Burke. But do you think such a sinner as I am, might dare to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ?

Charles. *Dare!* Certainly, the vilest wretch living might dare. *The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin. And this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom (said the apostle Paul) I am chief.*

Burke. Then you think the Lord Jesus would not cast me away?

Charles. Surely not! And the suspicion of such a thing is very wicked; especially when he has laid down his life for sinners. All things are ready, if you are only willing to submit yourself to the righteousness of Christ.

Burke. But my heart is so hard. I am not penitent enough. I have not mourned enough for my sins, and my heart seems just as wicked as ever.

Charles. But, my dear friend, do you not expect to *buy* Christ's favour? I know your heart is hard and wicked, and you need pardon, but how do you expect to get it if you stay away from the Saviour? O, come now, come at once; give

yourself up to Jesus, just as you are; believe in him, and all your sins shall be blotted out.

Burke. I am afraid to cast myself on Christ, lest he should reject me.

Charles. But surely your prospect is not any better by staying away. Can you make your heart any better?

Burke. What you say convinces me that I have been wrong, and that I ought immediately to repent and believe.

Charles. Then, let us go to a private place, where we may engage in prayer, and I trust you will at once secure the favour of God by faith in him.

The two youths retired to a secret

place, and knelt down. Charles prayed with great earnestness, but in a simple way, that his friend might be made a child of God. And while he was praying he could hear that Burke was weeping and sobbing. When the prayer was over, Burke threw his arms around Charles' neck, and said,

“I think I do believe in Christ! I see that he is able and willing to save me. I trust in him, and lean on him alone for salvation. Precious, precious Saviour! I will give him all I have, and all I am—”

Charles was more thankful than words could express, at this change in the mind of Burke. They were now constantly together, reading,

praying, and singing the praises of God. The change which had taken place was noticed by the whole school. Burke had been the ring-leader in all mischief, a bully, and a profane swearer. Now he was gentle as a lamb. He had been formerly very idle; now he was diligent and attentive. He spoke to many of his acquaintances, and told them how great his happiness now was. Before long he persuaded several of them to join with Clifford and himself, every day, in a meeting for reading and prayer; and there were several who became serious inquirers after the truth, as 't is in Christ Jesus.



CHAPTER X.

MARY CLIFFORD was much beloved by Mr. Lee and his family. She was two years older than Henrietta Lee, and the little girls spent much of their time together, in study and in play. One day Mary was sitting in the piazza by her table, with her hand upon her forehead, and with a very sad countenance. She was silent, and the tears stood in her eyes. Henrietta had been romping about the yard, but when she saw Mary look so sorrowful she came to her, and leaning affectionately upon her

arm, then said, while she looked up in her face,

“Mary, you look very sorrowful; has any thing happened to you?”

Mary. No, my dear; I was only thinking.

Henrietta. But you must tell me what you were thinking about.

Mary. I was thinking of several things; but what made me sad was thinking of my dear father and brother.

Henrietta. I wish your father would come home, for then you would look so cheerful! and you would take us all to Riverbank--would you not?

Mary. Yes, we should all be

glad. But I do not know when he will be back. If Charles was here we might at least please ourselves with taking him.

Henrietta. O, you will soon see Charles, for father says he will return next Saturday.

Mary. Indeed! I did not know that he would come so soon. Then we must go to work, Henrietta; for you know we promised to have his room all ready for him.

Henrietta. Yes, we must clean the glass of the pictures, and dust the books, and have the flower-pots in the windows. I wish I had a brother, Mary.

Mary. You had a brother once

Henrietta, but he is now in heaven and if you love the Lord Jesus Christ, you will see him there.

Henrietta. You seem to love your brother Charles very much : better than anybody in the world.

Mary. Yes, I love him, indeed, better than any one except my father. He is a good brother to me, and he is the only one I have. He is always trying to do me some good, and to teach me something useful. And when he is here, we spend so many pleasant hours together, that I do not know how to do without him.

Thus it was that this affectionate girl used to talk of her brother, and she was impatient for his return.

Saturday soon arrived, and Mr. Lee sent his servant with a horse for Charles. In the evening he rode gayly up to the house, and jumping off the horse, saluted his sister, and aunt, and all the family. Then there was glee and rejoicing until a late hour of the evening.

Charles and Mary were now inseparable. He was not to go to school any more, and therefore had abundance of time to give lessons to his sister. As soon as he returned, he began to lay plans for this. He drew up a little paper, in a beautiful handwriting, and put it in a frame over Mary's table. This contained the rules for the day ; so many hours

for reading, so many for writing and arithmetic, so many for work, so many for exercise, so many for music, and so many for reading the Bible. This last he thought the most important, for he was desirous that his sister should improve in Christian knowledge.

When their studies were over they used to walk in the garden and orchard, and gather the fruits which were then in season. But their favourite walk was on the banks of a little brook which ran through the meadows behind the parsonage. The sweet-mint grew plentifully along the edges, and gave a delightful smell. The alders and rose

bushes stood in green thickets along the sides of the brook, and were often filled with singing-birds. And where the stream ran into the woods there was a fine shady walk on both sides, with rough seats made of trees, at proper distances, where they might rest themselves. The water ran over the pebbles with a gentle, whispering sound, which was very agreeable.

At the season when Charles returned, the leaves were beginning to fall, and the woods had an appearance which no painter could imitate. There was every colour of the rainbow in the leaves, and every tree had a colour of its own. Charles

taught his sister to distinguish the bright scarlet of the maple, the blood-red of the dog-wood, the rusty hue of the several kinds of oak, and the yellow of the hickory. He showed her how the leaves of some trees, like the beech, remained on almost all winter, and how the rotting leaves made the ground richer for the next year. He pointed out to her many of the plants which Mr. Carter had taught him to know; such as many kinds of golden rod, which bloom in autumn; the spatterdock, or *sagitaria*, which spreads its broad leaves on the ponds, and has two different kinds of flowers; and the ferns, which have no flowers at all

Mary was delighted with all this. Indeed, she would have been delighted with almost any thing which her brother taught her ; for she was pleased to be with him, and to talk with him. They truly loved one another, as every brother and sister should do ; and this was the way to be really happy. When one of them was glad, the other was always sure to partake of the gladness ; and each tried to comfort the other under any sorrow.

The two elder daughters of Mr. Lee were very amiable young ladies, who had received a good education. They took great pains to assist Miss Clifford in teaching Mary ; and in

return, Mary loved and respected them. The little girl had been trying for a long time to think of some way in which she might please these kind young ladies. At last she applied to Charles to help her, and he proposed the following plan :

“If you will make two little needle-cases of white satin,” said he, “I will paint pictures and names upon the outside of them.”

“I cannot sew well enough,” said Mary.

“Then,” replied he, “you must get aunt Esther to help you, and we will not let any one know until they are finished.”

Charles had a genius for drawing

and painting, so that the drawing-master at the academy used to say that he ought to be a painter. Charles laughed at this notion, but still, he often amused himself and his friends with his pencil. When the little needle-cases were done, he took them into his room, and began to make his pictures. On one of them he drew a representation of *Riverbank*, and with the words, *For Miss Caroline Lee*. On the other he put a view of the *Parsonage*, with the words, *For Miss Jane Lee*. They then wrapped them up carefully, and laid them upon the table of the young ladies. Mary did not intend to say any thing about it; for she wished to surprise her friends.

Several days passed, and every time the ladies came into the room, Charles and Mary expected something to be said about the presents. But not a word was uttered upon the subject. At last, Mary became so impatient, that she said to her aunt,

“I wonder that Miss Jane and Miss Caroline never say any thing about the needle-cases !”

“I am surprised too,” said Miss Clifford ; “I think I must ask them about it.”

So she inquired, and found that they had never seen them at all. They could not imagine who could have taken them, but Mrs. Lee said

she suspected a little girl who had lately come to the house as a servant. When the thing came to be inquired into, it appeared that Henrietta had seen the little servant-girl with a needle-case of this kind. So, Sally was called, and though she denied having any such thing, yet when Mrs. Lee brought them down from her chamber, all soiled and ruined, she confessed that she had taken them.

When Mary saw her beautiful work thus defaced, she became quite angry; her face became very red, and at length she burst into tears. Charles also was more concerned for his sister's disappointment, than if

it had been his own loss; he therefore turned round to the child, and said, very roughly,

“You are a wicked little thief! and I hope you will be punished.”

Miss Clifford took him gently by the arm, and said,

“Charles, Charles! you are too warm; you should speak more gently.”

Charles blushed, and said,

“I confess I spoke too hastily. I should have remembered that perhaps this little girl has never had any instruction. And, now, Mrs. Lee, I beg that you will not turn her out of the family on this account.”

After some conversation with the child, Mr. Lee was convinced that it was her first offence, and at Charles' request he suffered her to remain in the house.

When Charles and Mary went to walk in the afternoon, they began to talk about this matter. And their conversation led to other things of more importance. Therefore, I will conclude this chapter by putting down what they said.

Charles. I am sorry that I became so angry to-day with poor Sally, for I am sure she is sorry enough for what she has done.

Mary. But, then I do not wonder at you being angry to see all your

beautiful work soiled with her dirty fingers; so we have had all our trouble for nothing.

Charles. No, I hope it is not for nothing. I hope we shall both learn from this not to speak before we think, and also to make allowances for poor children, who have not had our advantages.

Mary. But, brother, do you not think it was a great sin?

Charles. Certainly. But, then we must remember that Sally has had nobody to teach her, as we have had. She cannot read in the Bible; and Mr. Lee says her father is a wretched drunkard. O, sister, we ought never to forget

how greatly we have been favoured. When we were very small children, our parents used to spend many hours in teaching us.

Mary. I know that very few have had such advantages.

Charles. Do you remember when father used to take us upon his knee, and tell us Scripture stories?

Mary. O, yes. And it makes me sad to think about those days. It was so delightful to be at Riverbank. And I remember how we used to sit in the arbour on the summer evenings, and sing hymns.

Charles. We ought to be thankful for those days; perhaps we shall never have any more like them.

Mary. I wonder if our dear father will ever come home! O, brother, what do you think has become of him?

Charles. Indeed, I am as ignorant about it as you are. Mr. Lee thinks that we shall very soon hear something, because the war has stopped in Spain and Portugal, where father had some thoughts of going.

Mary. O, brother, perhaps he has been killed!

Charles. Mary, you must remember that we are all in the hands of the Lord. I remember very well, that before our dear father went away, we all knelt down and asked

the blessing of God upon his voyage. And we have all prayed every day for the same thing. Now, I hope God has answered these prayers, and that father will return again.

Mary. But what if he should never return?

Charles. That is dreadful to think of. But we must ask grace of the Lord to help us in every time of trouble. God is *the Father of the fatherless*. He took care of us when our dear mother died. O, how well I remember that sad night, when I saw her on her dying bed! You were too small to be there, Mary; but I can never forget it. Do you remember your mother?

Mary. I can just remember her, but I was too young to know much.

Charles. I think I see her now sitting by the window, where she used to look out on the river, when she was too feeble to walk. She was so pale and thin, and her voice was so weak, that it made me always sorry to see her.

Mary. Did she speak to you when she was on her death-bed?

Charles. Yes, Mary; and I dare say that what she said to me was meant for *you* too. Aunt Esther waked me up before day, and took me into the room. I could just hear my dear mother's voice, when she stretched out her hands, and

said, "My son—my son, love and serve God—remember your dying mother's words—love and serve God." And then she fell into the nurse's arms, and after I had kissed her cold lips, she died. O! I shall remember it as long as I live.

When Charles said these things, Mary leaned her head against his arm, and began to weep. Charles also wept, and it was some time before they could go on with their conversation. At last he said,

"What a blessing it is to have pious parents! Then, even if they are taken away from us, we may be sure they have gone to heaven; and if we believe in the Saviour we shall meet them again."

Mary. That is true. Poor Sally's father is a profane, drunken man, and if he dies, she can never have any comfort in thinking of him.

Charles. The way for us to feel always happy, is to trust in the Lord. Then we know that every thing will happen aright. We will not forget to pray every day for our dear absent father, and I hope before long that we shall have some news from him.

Mary. O, brother, it would be almost too good—too happy to think of, if father should come back again. Then we should all live together at Riverbank.

Charles. Yes, it would indeed be

a great happiness; and perhaps our heavenly Father will give us this great blessing. But whatever he does, we know will be right and merciful.

Mary. Perhaps we have never been thankful enough for our good things.

Charles. I am sure we have not. We are never thankful enough for favours. We deserve nothing at all, and instead of complaining, we should be giving thanks. We do very little in return for all our mercies.

Mary. Brother, you say we ought always to be trying to do good; suppose I begin this very evening to teach poor Sally to read.

Charles. I am glad you thought of it. You may do her a great deal of good, and it will be the best way of showing her that you have no ill-will against her for what she has done.

It was now beginning to grow dark, and Charles and Mary returned to the house, where they found all the happy family collected. After a pleasant evening, they engaged in the worship of God, and then retired to rest

CHAPTER XI.

IN the midst of all the anxiety which Charles felt about his father, he employed himself in trying to do good ; for he thought this would be the best way to prevent sadness and gloom. He knew that it was not common for very young persons to go about visiting the poor, but he did not think this was any good reason why he should not obey our Saviour's command. Therefore, he found out many suffering families, and procured relief for them. But there was another method of useful-

ness, of which I shall now give an account.

There was a week of uncommonly warm weather in the autumn of this year, and the young people spent most of their time in the open air. One afternoon Miss Caroline and Miss Jane were sitting on one of the seats in the grove, under a fine shady bank, when Charles came walking towards them in company with a little boy from the neighbouring farm.

“I have brought James Temple to see you,” said Charles; and seating himself upon the grass, he began to explain his plan, which was, that each of them should try to get seve-

ral scholars by the next Lord's-day and that they should then begin to teach.

“But where will you teach?” said Mary.

James. O, my father says the upper room in the old mill is never used for any thing, and it is very nice and clean.

Caroline. That is just the place! For there are a number of poor families around there, and their children need instruction very much.

James We do not know what to do for books, but I hope Mr. Lee will help us.

Caroline. We can gather a few books to begin with among the

neighbours, and when father goes to the city next week, he can get us as many as we want.

Jane. Yes, we will all put in our pocket money to buy books ; and all the good people in the neighbourhood will help on.

Mary. Do you think I am big enough to teach in the Sunday-school ? I can teach the A, B, C.

Jane. Yes, certainly. You may have two or three little girls, who do not know their letters.

Charles. And as Miss Caroline is the eldest among us, and knows the most, she shall be our superintendent.

Caroline I am very willing to do

what I can, until you can get a better person.

So the plan was arranged, and the next morning they all set out to visit the neighbours, and try how many scholars they could get. Their visits were received in very different ways at the different houses. Some of the people said, that they could not see any use in learning to read, and that their children should not go. Others said, that they thought there must be some evil intended, for they did not suppose these young people would be so ready to take all this trouble for nothing. Some made this excuse, that their children had no clothes fit to go out in.

Others said, that they wished their little boys and girls to stay at home, to help them at their work. But in a number of houses they found children who agreed to come.

The young people were very much taken up with their plan, and when the day arrived for beginning, they all set off very cheerfully for the mill. It was about a mile from the parsonage, but they were all fond of walking, and arrived there at a very early hour. Here they met Miss Temple and James, and found a number of little boys and girls, who looked very clean and neat. They had thirteen scholars to begin with. To each of these

they gave a hymn-book and a New Testament, with a spelling-book to such as could not read. Miss Caroline examined them all, to see how much they knew, and then divided them into little classes. Miss Temple had three of the larger girls. Miss Jane had also three. And Mary undertook to teach little Sally, whom she brought along with her. Charles took the four larger boys, and James Temple agreed to instruct the two smallest boys in the school, who were the sons of the miller.

Miss Caroline went from one class to another, and explained the way in which they were to learn. She gave each of the teachers a little book, in

which they were to write down the names of the scholars, and mark when they were absent. She told them that in a few weeks they would have a library, with a number of good Sunday-school books, and that each scholar who behaved well might take a book home, and keep it all the week.

Some of the children did not know how to behave themselves at first. They had never been to school before, and they whispered and ran about without leave. But when Miss Caroline explained to them that this was wrong, they all seemed desirous to be quiet. Both the teachers and scholars were very much pleased

and it was a beautiful sight to behold a number of children beginning to learn the way of life. When they were nearly through their lessons, Mr. Lee rode up to the door, and, getting off his horse, came in with a smiling countenance. He shook hands with all the children, and asked about their parents. He also gave some little books to such as could read, and heard some of them recite. Then he told them all to close their books, while he made a short address to them. He told them, that as their teachers were quite young, he intended to take the school under his own particular care, and that they might expect to see him

there every Lord's-day. And then he read a hymn for them to sing and offered up prayer; after which the school was dismissed.

There was not one of the teachers who was not glad that this school had been formed. They now had something to employ their minds all the week, and they felt a strong hope that they might do some good. On the Sabbath evening, when the family were collected for evening prayers, Mr. Lee spoke to them as follows :

“ My dear children, I feel thankful that we have another Sunday-school, and that so many of my family are engaged in this good work. Now,

I wish you all to remember, that it is a very serious thing to try to teach others. You are about to teach these children to read the Scriptures, the word of God, and to understand what the Bible means. You must be careful never to forget this; and you must always attend to those things which you teach others. It would be dreadful if any of you should show these children what they ought to do to be saved, without doing it yourselves. All your teaching will do no good without the blessing of God. Therefore, you should constantly pray for the souls of the children, and try in every way to lead them to the Lord Jesus Christ.

And during the week, it will be very right for you to go and see them, and talk with them, and show them how to get their lessons."

On Monday morning, Charles went to see his little scholars, and talked with their parents. He also found several other children who agreed to come to the school. The other teachers did the same thing, so that on the next Lord's-day they had more than thirty scholars. It began to be talked about among the neighbours, and a number of grown persons came to see the school. There were various opinions on the subject. Some said it was a very good thing, while others ridiculed it,

and said that nothing could be learned by going to school two or three hours in the week. But they soon saw their mistake; for some of the parents said that their children learned more on Sunday than in all the rest of the week put together. And as the little boys and girls were not forced to learn, but did every thing of their own accord, it was surprising to see with what pleasure they got their lessons.

Charles remembered Mr. Lee's advice, and took care to talk with every one of his scholars privately. He tried to make them understand that they were sinners, and that the Lord Jesus Christ had died to save

the souls of men. And some of the little boys seemed very much affected with what he said, and often shed tears. It was not long before their books came, and then they had a library. Mr. Hope, the carpenter, made and presented them a neat bookcase; and the girls put strong covers upon the books, to keep them from being injured. When the children took the books home, their fathers and mothers often read them, and Mr. Lee used to say that this made many come to church who had never come before.

“The more Sunday-schools I have,” said he, “the more people come out to the worship of God.”

But there are many persons in the country who do not like Sunday schools, and who do every thing they can to oppose them. The reason of this is, that they are enemies to all religion, and do not wish to be disturbed in their sins. There was a person of this description in the neighbourhood of the parsonage. This was Dr. Milton, an elderly man, who had spent most of his life in practising medicine, but was now living on his farm. He was very rich, and used to pass his time in pleasures of every kind. He was fond of drinking, and card-playing, and horse-racing, and went from one tavern to another, where he could

find jolly companions. He was so rough and unfriendly in his manners, that very few people liked him, though many feared him on account of his wealth.

One Sabbath morning, when they were all busily engaged in their school, Doctor Milton galloped up to the house. He came in suddenly, without taking off his hat, and looked so stupid in the face, that Miss Lee supposed he was a little intoxicated. The truth was, he had just taken enough of liquor to make him rude and ill-natured. Miss Lee placed a chair for him, but he took no notice of it. He walked about among the children, with a very

contemptuous look. The teachers, after speaking to him politely, went on with their lessons. After some time, he threw himself into a chair, and seemed to be laughing at everything he saw. At last he burst into a loud laugh.

“Ha ! ha ! ha ! fine work,” said he, “fine work for young ladies, to be coming to an old mill, to teach a parcel of dirty children.”

“We are trying to do them good,” said Miss Lee ; “and I believe there is no harm in teaching them the Scriptures.”

“Teaching them a fiddlestick !” said he, and broke out again in a roar of laughter. “Teaching them

to be a set of whining hypocrites, you nad better say !”

The teachers were very much disturbed by his behaviour, and the scholars scarcely knew what to think of it. The little ones giggled, and some who were larger seemed frightened. But the doctor went on.

“ Young ladies,” said he, “ I will tell you the reason why you are so good ; you wish to be admired.”

Charles was much offended by this remark ; and as the young ladies had no protector but himself, his temper was excited more than was common with him. He rose, and said,

“ Doctor Milton, your remarks are

very rude; this is *our* school, and you have no right to interfere with it."

'Pray, Master Independence," said the doctor, "what might your name be? I do not remember that I ever saw you before."

"It makes no difference," said Charles; "you have spoken in a very ungentlemanly way, and we desire that you would leave us."

The doctor then threatened to strike him with his riding-whip, at which Charles became very angry, and said some things which were entirely too harsh, and which he was sorry for afterwards. He then told the doctor that his name was Clif-

ford, and that Captain Clifford was his father. The doctor seemed to think then that he had gone too far, and marched out of the house.

When he had gone, Charles began to think that he had not spoken in a proper manner to Doctor Milton. And when he mentioned this to Miss Lee, she said that Charles had been too warm; and though the doctor had behaved so little like a gentleman, this did not excuse the anger of Charles. These things made the young people think that they must not expect to do good without meeting with some opposition and ridicule. But they very seldom met with any thing so trying to their

feelings as this. Indeed, this person never gave them any further trouble, and always seemed to be ashamed of the manner in which he had treated them.

The Sunday-school was a blessing to the neighbourhood. It was not long before several of the scholars appeared to be deeply concerned for the salvation of their souls. And some of the parents learned things from their children which they had never known before, and which made them think very seriously. The idle, dirty children who used to be playing about the wayside, and making a noise every Sabbath, were now seen, neat and quiet, going to

the school. The teachers also were more and more pleased with their work. They found that they learned a great deal by teaching others; and they had the constant pleasure of knowing that they were doing some good.

Thus the autumn passed away, and the cold weather began to come on. When the nights became long, and it was too cold to be much out of doors, the family used to collect after tea every evening for reading. They took turns in reading aloud such useful and entertaining books as Mr. Lee chose for this purpose. They read travels in various parts of the world, and interesting

histories, besides the lives of many good and great persons. Then they would ask questions, and converse together; and thus the long winter evenings passed by most pleasantly. Mr. Lee also took pains to show them many beautiful experiments in natural philosophy and chemistry. He procured an electrical machine and an air-pump for this very purpose, and spent a great part of his time in giving them instruction. In the bright winter nights, he used to take the young people out, and show them the different constellations into which the stars are divided, and also the moon through a telescope.

Thus they were learning more

and more every day, without ever feeling it to be a task. The labour of study was rendered delightful, and they were encouraged to go on and learn still more.

Charles and Mary took the greatest delight in the study of the Holy Scriptures. They tried to find out every thing which could make them understand the Bible more fully. And Mr. Lee assisted them in this, by getting maps of the countries mentioned in Scripture, and books of travels which describe them, together with various accounts of the manners and customs of eastern people. All these things enabled them to teach their

Sunday scholars; and every thing which they learned, that could be made use of in this way, they conveyed to the little children. But in the midst of all these comforts and blessings, there was something lacking. They heard nothing of their father, and were ready to give up all hope of seeing him. He was so ill when he went away, that they thought it likely he had died in some strange place, and that they should never hear of him. In this trouble, they found no way of relief out in laying their sorrows before the Lord.

CHAPTER XII.

CAPTAIN CLIFFORD had always taken great pains to keep his children from any superstitious notions. For this purpose he never allowed the servants to tell them any foolish tales about signs, and tokens, and witches. But notwithstanding all this, it is certain that Mary had got some things of this kind into her head, which did her much harm.

One morning, when Miss Esther Clifford was sewing by the parlour fire, Mary came up to her with a very sad countenance, and with tears in her eyes.

“What can be the matter with you this morning?” said Miss Clifford.

“O, aunt! I am sure my dear father is dead, and that we shall never see him again.”

Miss Clifford. But why do you think so, Mary? You are not a prophetess, to foretell what shall come to pass.

Mary. No; but this morning I feel as I never felt before. I feel sure that something is going to happen, almost as sure as if I saw it. Something seems to say to me all the time, “Your father is dead!—your father is dead!” I cannot get it out of my mind.

Miss C. This is an idle impression. It is what people call a *pre-sentiment*. And it is what I call superstition. It is very unreasonable. You ought to put your trust in the goodness of the Lord, and not to give way to such feelings.

Mary. I *do* try, but I cannot help thinking so still.

Miss C. I am afraid somebody has been putting this foolish notion into your head. Now, come and tell me the truth; have not some of the servants been talking to you about this?

Mary. I *will* tell you the truth, Aunt Esther. I *have* heard something, but not from the servants.

Miss C. Who could have been so wicked then as to talk to you in this way ?

Mary. It was old Mrs. Carpenter, whom we all used to call Granny. I called in at her house with the young woman who was coming here to sew.

Miss C. But you ought not to call her *Granny*; she does not like it.

Mary. No, she does not. It was that which made her angry with me, and then she tried to frighten me. She said she had had a dream, and that she knew father would never return. She also said, that their looking-glass had fallen down of itself, and that an owl had screeched by her window for three nights; and

that this was always a sign of death among the neighbours.

Miss C. And is it possible, Mary, that you could believe this wicked nonsense?

Mary. I did not exactly believe it; but it is so long since we heard from father, that it made me sad. And then this thought came over my mind, and I could not shake it off.

Miss C. Now, my dear Mary, put all such notions out of your head at once. God has always mercifully provided for us, and he will still do us good, if we trust in him. Besides, if he wished us to know what was going to happen, he would not

send an owl or a wicked old woman to tell us. Think no more of this, lest you offend God; but go and pray to him, and that will relieve your mind.

So, Mary became much more cheerful, and sat down to her work as usual. The next day was very cold, but the morning was clear and beautiful. During the night there had been rain and sleet, which had covered all the trees and bushes with a coat of ice. And when the children looked out after sunrise, it seemed as if millions of diamonds and other precious stones were hanging upon the branches. The bright weather and the bracing cold revived

every one's spirits, so that they enjoyed the wintry morning as much as if it had been spring. At breakfast, they conversed with much cheerfulness, and even Mary was full of glee.

After breakfast, they went to their several employments. When they came together again at dinner, they took notice that Mr. Lee was missing. Upon inquiry, it was found that he had received a letter in the morning, and that he had instantly ordered a carriage at the public house. Charles said he now remembered Mr. Lee's having said in the morning, that several French packets were daily expected, and that

they would perhaps have news from his father. This made them all very anxious, as Mr. Lee had said nothing when he went away. Miss Clifford turned pale, and expressed some fear lest the letter which had come contained bad news. But Jane Lee was sure this was not the case, for she had seen her father when he read the letter; and he never looked more joyful in his life. He was, indeed, in a great hurry, and could scarcely find time to say a word, but when he went away, he was far from seeming melancholy.

These things did not entirely remove the anxiety of the family. Miss Clifford shut herself up in her

room all the afternoon. Mary asked a thousand mournful questions of all the young people; and Charles, after vainly trying to attend to what he was reading, closed the book, and paced up and down the floor for several hours. At almost every turn, he would look out of the window, as if he expected some one; and at every sound of the carriages which passed, he started and grew pale. His thoughts were full of his dear absent father. At last he remembered how often he had been comforted by prayer. He therefore went to his room, and after reading several passages in the Bible, he prayed to God to be gracious to him.

and to prepare him for all his holy will. Such was his anxiety of mind, that his body became quite weak, and he trembled through his whole frame.

It grew dark, and yet there was nothing seen of Mr. Lee. At the tea-table every one seemed to be without appetite ; and when they sat down as usual by the fire, no one proposed to read aloud. At last a carriage was heard to drive up. It stopped ; the steps were let down, and persons were heard talking without. As they came near, Miss Clifford, who had been breathless with suspense started up, and exclaimed

“It is my brother’s voice !”

She rushed to the door, but Charles had been before her, and was clasped in his father’s arms. It was, indeed, Captain Clifford. He seized his little daughter in a rapture of parental affection, and scarcely could believe it to be Mary, so much was she grown and improved. The joy of all was such, that they felt as if it were a delightful dream, and no reality. Mr. Lee had received a letter from Captain Clifford, stating that he had just arrived at New York, and desired to have a carriage sent for him to a neighbouring town. He chose to take his family by surprise.

When the captain threw off his cloak, they were rejoiced to see that all appearance of ill-health was gone. He was robust and fleshy, and his countenance had the appearance of strength and cheerfulness. He was amazed and delighted to see Charles grown up to be almost a man; and as for his little Mary, he could not suffer her to be a moment away from his side. There were so many questions to be asked, that it was very long before either side could receive much satisfaction. Mr. Lee and his family sat in silence, not willing to interrupt the joy of their friends, but expressing by their looks how truly they partook of the pleasure. At last Mr. Lee said,

‘ My dear sir, it will be the best plan, I am sure, for you to give us some account of your travels, without any further questions.’

“ I will very willingly do so,” said the captain ; “ but, first of all, let us kneel down together, and do you, my good sir, offer up thanks giving to God for this joyful meeting.”

All were gratified with this proposal, and when they arose from their knees, there was scarcely one whose eyes were not wet with tears of joy. The following conversation then took place.

Capt. Clifford. I suppose you received the letters which I wrote you from Marseilles ?

Miss Clifford. One letter we received, being the first you wrote after your arrival; and since that time, we have never had even a syllable to inform us of your being alive.

Capt. C. Your anxiety must have been great indeed, but God has, I trust, taught us all to profit by our afflictions. It would occupy the whole night for me to give even a general account of all that I have passed through; this I must defer to some more favourable time.

Charles. Pray, inform us when you began to recover your health.

Capt. C. As soon as I got fairly out at sea, I began to feel better

By the time we reached Marseilles, my cough had entirely left me ; and though I was still weak, yet I considered myself free from disease. The French physicians recommended that I should travel into Spain, and spend some months in the southern provinces, where the climate is very balmy. I determined to do so, but having exposed myself to the rains in crossing the mountains to get into Spain, I was again seized with my cough, and lay ill among strangers for several months. This is one reason why you did not hear from me.

Mr. Lee. We supposed that the war in Spain and Portugal prevented your letters from coming.

Capt. C. That was the case, for after I recovered, I went into Portugal, and was there when the British army entered it. I was imprudent enough to think, that as I was an American, I should not be troubled ; but I was always taken for an Englishman, and was for a number of months held as a prisoner of war.

Mary. A prisoner ! O, father, did they put you in prison ? Did they put chains on you ?

Capt. C. No, my dear. I was very kindly treated, but still I was not suffered to go about, and I had no opportunity of sending letters. I wrote a great many, but now I find you received none of them.

Miss C. But now all is made up to us, my dear brother. We have you here once more in perfect health, and we can never be thankful enough. But, Mary, what do you think now of your signs, and tokens, and pre-sentiments?

Mary was ashamed, and hung down her head. The captain inquired what this meant, and then taught her about it, as her aunt had previously done. Then there were many questions asked by him concerning the way in which his son and daughter had spent their time. And it gave him the highest pleasure that they had both conducted themselves so well. He saw also that

Charles was a serious and conscientious boy, and that he would now be his companion in all that was good.

The evening flew swiftly away, and at length it became necessary for Mr. Lee to remind them that it was time to retire to rest. After family worship, they separated for the night; but few of the family could close their eyes to sleep. Joy and gratitude agitated their bosoms. Charles could not help looking back, and reproaching himself for having ever doubted the goodness of the Lord. He now remembered how often he had prayed for this favour, and God had now been better to him than all his fears. He had no words

to express his thankfulness, but he endeavoured more solemnly than ever before to give himself entirely away to the service of God.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHEN the next morning dawned, it seemed as if each one had endeavoured to rise before the rest; for at an earlier hour than common, they were all gathered for the worship of God. None was happier than Mary. She was very small when her father went away, and she had hardly known how to prize him; but now she found him so tender and affectionate, that she could scarcely leave him at all.

When they were sitting around the breakfast-table, the captain turned to his good friend, and said,

“Mr. Lee, I love your house very much, and I can never repay you for your kindness to my family; yet I feel that this is not *home*; and after so long an absence, I am strongly desirous to see Riverbank once more.”

“I rejoice,” said Charles, “to hear you say so. There is no place I shall ever love so much. And you will be pleased to see how neatly every thing has been kept.”

“Is old Roger alive and well?” asked the captain.

“As brisk as a bee,” said Charles, “and he will scarcely be able to contain himself when he hears of your return.”

“I shall take the good old folks by surprise,” replied Captain Clifford; “for we are all going in the carriage to Riverbank, as soon as you can get yourselves ready, after breakfast.”

“O, father!” said Mary, “are we going back to live there?”

“Yes, my dear; for though I am sorry to take you away from these dear friends, yet they must remember how long I have been without my children, and how long you have been without your father.”

It took several hours for all to get ready to go. And then there were many tears shed in taking leave of the excellent family of Mr. Lee. But the carriage was at the door

and finally it drove off, with Captain Clifford, and his sister, son, and daughter. As they drove along, he could not refrain from lifting up his hands, and giving thanks for the mercy which had restored him to his family. And every farm-house, stream, and grove seemed to bring to his recollection things which had happened many years before.

They now began to draw near to their beloved home. The fields which Captain Clifford now saw belonged to his own estate, and every tree and hedge looked like an old acquaintance.

“There ” said he, “I begin to see the house, and the noble old elms ;

and yonder I see the broad river stretching itself through the low grounds——” And then he dropped a tear, for he called to mind the dearest friend of his heart, who had lived with him so long on this pleasant spot, and who was now, as he trusted, in heaven.

When the carriage began to draw near to the house itself, several of the gardener’s children saw it, and running out, discovered who was coming. They told the news, and in a few minutes Roger and his wife and all the children were collected, to welcome Captain Clifford home. It was pleasing to see the tears stand in the old man’s eyes as he shook

the hand of the captain. And it was plain that the meeting gave pleasure on all sides. Captain Clifford could scarcely be satisfied with looking. While Roger was kindling a fire in the dining-room, he strolled over the lawn, which was now frozen, and through the grove of oaks. He walked in the gardens, and descended the steps to the edge of the river. He gazed upon the lovely prospect which he had surveyed so often in other days, and could not help saying,

“ My children, see how good the Lord is, how much better than we deserve, and even than we expect. For I dare say you often feared that you should never see me again.”

“We did, indeed,” said Charles ,
“and I hope we shall learn from
this, always to trust in Providence.”

“That is right,” said his father ;
“I also had many fears that I should
never live to see you again ; but
nere we are in happiness and love.”

Then they went into the house,
and passed through each apartment.
The captain was filled with plea-
sure at the sight of his books and
his study. A plain dinner was soon
provided for them, and before many
hours, they all seemed as much at
home there as if they had never been
absent.

It is not necessary to give a par-
ticular account of the manner in

which they passed their time. Captain Clifford spent some weeks in looking over the affairs of his farm, and receiving the visits of his neighbours. Then he began to make his arrangements for the way in which they were all to be employed. Miss Clifford was to have the management of the family, and the care of Mary, who was to be instructed in every thing necessary to housekeeping. The captain intended to continue the instruction of his children in useful knowledge. He meant to keep Charles with him, until he should be fitted for some kind of active life. Especially, he took care that it should be a Christian family,

and that every thing should be conducted according to the commands of God.

After they had been well settled for a little time, they received a visit from Mr. Lee's family, whom they loved as if they had been relations. And for many years, the two families used to go very frequently to see one another. Charles also invited several of his school-mates to come and spend some time at Riverbank, particularly Reynolds and Burke, who stayed there several weeks.

But I must now bring my history to a close. The reader has an account of a youthful Christian, and it is not needful to follow him into manhood. But as there are several

important lessons which may be learned from this narrative, I shall close with some account of these.

The young reader will here take notice what a blessed thing it is to have the instructions of pious parents. Charles Clifford never forgot the truths which were taught him by his pious mother. And her dying words made an impression upon his heart which was never lost.

This narration shows also that those who serve God are not free from afflictions. The persons who have been here mentioned passed through very great trials. But these sufferings proved to be blessings through the grace of God, and made them more watchful and devout

than they would otherwise have been. So that the Lord turned all their afflictions into rejoicing at last.

The story of Charles Clifford shows that no young man will really be a loser by trying to do what God commands. Though he may be opposed and ridiculed, yet in the end even his enemies will approve of his conduct.

We perceive, too, how much good may be done, even by a very young person, if he truly desires to glorify God. By a holy example, by religious conversation, by teaching in Sunday-schools, or in some similar way, every one who reads this may be useful.

It also appears that it is true religion which makes a happy family. How much happier was the household at Riverbank than those families which are irreligious and careless! Even when they were in much anxiety and distress, they were kept from despondency by trust in the promises of God.

Lastly, if there is any thing in the example of Charles Clifford which is excellent and lovely, it is the desire and prayer of the writer that it may be imitated by every young person who reads this book.

THE END.



LETTERS

TO A

YOUNGER BROTHER,

ON VARIOUS SUBJECTS,

RELATING TO

THE VIRTUES AND VICES, DUTIES AND
DANGERS OF YOUTH.

REVISED BY THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION OF THE
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LETTERS

TO A

YOUNGER BROTHER.

LETTER I.

READING THE SCRIPTURES.

My dear brother,—You gave me much gratification when you informed me that you were attentive to the reading of the Scriptures. And I rejoice to find you inquiring how you may continue to read them with greater profit. I shall answer your questions, and shall also, from time to time, write you some directions on other things; such as your learning, your manners, and your amusements. I take your questions as you ask them.

1. *Ought I to read the Bible in regular order?*

I think you ought. Not that this should be your only way of reading; but every day you should be going forward. Suppose you were roaming through a beautiful estate, such as the place on the Delaware where Joseph Bonaparte resides; and that your object was to learn all about it. You might pursue *two* methods. *First*, you might set out at one of the gates, and follow the first path; then strike off into a grove, and walk a few steps; then branch into a garden; then return to see the fishpond or the statue. You might spend a day or two in this employment, and at the end of it you would have seen a great many beautiful things. But while you had looked at some of these four or five times over, there would be a great number of spots which you had not

seen at all. Instead of looking ten times at the observatory, you might have looked at ten different scenes. What was the matter? I will tell you ; you did not view it in *regular order*. You had no plan. So you might spend years in reading the Scriptures ; and at the end of them, you would have learned many whole chapters or even books of the Bible ; yet there might be some very useful parts which you would know nothing about. Why ? Because you did not read in *regular order*.

Secondly : You might get an exact plan of Bonaparte's grounds, like a little map, on a piece of paper ; then you might divide it off into portions, and say, "I can do so much to-day, and so much to-morrow, &c." Then you might go over every step of the fine park and gardens, look at every bridge, and examine every curiosity. You would have surveyed every

single beauty. But what makes the difference between these methods? You viewed it this second time in *regular order*. Thus, too, you ought to read the Scriptures. And if you lay down a plan, and take care to observe it, and keep it up for a few years, you will know something about the whole Bible. Why? Because you read it in *regular order*.

2. *Ought I to commit verses to memory?*

Most certainly you ought; at least half a dozen every day. The more you learn by rote, the more you will be able to learn.

If you get six verses every morning, for one year, you will have learned more than two thousand verses, or more than sixty chapters. But this is not all. At the end of the year, it will be as easy for you to commit twenty verses to memory, as it is now for you to commit half a

dozen. The best plan I know of is to learn your verses partially just before you prepare to go to bed. Think of them as you are falling asleep, repeat them as you wake the next morning; and after your morning devotions, learn them perfectly. This you will find, when you go further in your Latin, was the advice of the ancients, and if you lay to heart what you learn, it will be the greatest treasure. Nobody can rob you of it. You may be shipwrecked, or robbed, or imprisoned, but no one can take this out of your memory.

3. *Ought I to read the Bible for amusement?*

Not exactly. If you mean reading it with a thoughtless, careless mind, certainly not. But if you mean, reading its beautiful narratives, and its lively descriptions, because you admire them, and because it refreshes and delights you,

certainly it is right for you to read it thus. I have just been reading again the story of Joseph, in the book of Genesis, and I find it more charming than any thing I ever saw in any history or romance. Now there is no harm in your going to the Bible for pleasure, rather than to any other book. It is wonderful that more persons do not find out how much interesting history the Scriptures contain. Just think of the life of David. It is far more striking than that of Peter the Great, or Baron Trenck. Yet scarcely any one opens the Bible to find rational entertainment.

So I have answered your questions: and now I shall add a few remarks of my own. There are two books in the Bible which are exceedingly interesting and useful. One was written in poetry; the other in prose. The greater part of one was composed by a great king; the

greater part of the other by his son, another great king. One was by a warrior, a musician, and a poet; the other was by the wisest monarch who ever lived. In these two books you will find directions for your *devotions* and your *conduct*. The Psalms are noble pieces of prayer, thanksgiving, and praise; the Proverbs are short sayings, every one of which is full of meaning, and rich with wisdom. When you are older, I would recommend to you to read each of these books through *once a month*. The book of *Psalms* is already divided into portions, for every morning and evening, in the book I gave you. And the book of *Proverbs* has just as many chapters as there are days in the long months, one for every day. Scarcely any day will pass in which you will not find an opportunity to govern your speech or your behaviour by some one of these

short maxims. And as the Lord Jesus Christ is the great *subject* of many psalms, you will learn from the New Testament how to find him every-where in your daily reading.

Farewell, my dear boy. Attend to your studies and your health, and, above all, offer up your heart to God.

I am your affectionate brother,

JAMES.



LETTER II.

GRATITUDE TO PARENTS.

My dear brother,—I write you on this subject thus early in my course of letters, because I think gratitude to parents is the foundation of a great many virtues; and one of the first and most distressing symptoms of a decline from the paths of virtue is

the unkind or contemptuous treatment of parents. The first commandment with promise is the command to honour our parents, and our earliest duties are those which we have to render to our father and our mother. You will find counsels on this subject scattered through my letters; but as young people are apt to be impressed by narrative, I will give you a little history, which I am sure you will find interesting. The story is connected with the beautiful engraving at the beginning of these letters.

There lived two poor men in a very rough and mountainous country, where they kept their flocks, and cultivated such little spots of earth as they could find among the rocks and crags. It was a region abounding in rapid streams, which poured in torrents from the precipices. There was scarcely any point

from which you might not see the tops of mountains covered with snow. The hills were so rough that it was difficult and dangerous to travel even a mile, from one hamlet to another. Carriages were almost unknown, and most of the inhabitants travelled on foot, and carried their goods upon mules or asses.

Ulrich and Godfrey, the two men I have spoken of, had large families, and in each of these was a little boy about eleven years of age. These boys often played together, but they were exceedingly unlike in temper. Little Ulrich was sullen and rude; while his playmate Godfrey was kind and gentle. Ulrich's mother found it very hard to manage the stubborn little boy. He was undutiful and unkind, and gave his parents many hours of anxiety. Sometimes when he was sent to look for the cattle, which strayed in the

mountains, he would go to some of the neighbours' houses, and stay several days, while his mother would be in the greatest alarm, lest some accident had befallen him. The ungrateful boy seemed never to think of what might be the cares of his parents. He did not reflect on the hours and days and months of solicitude which his poor mother had felt on his account; how she had watched by his pillow when he slept, and nursed him when he was sick, and provided his food, and sat up many a long night to make or mend his clothes. Forgetful of all this, Ulrich would be sulky and sour when she spoke to him, and would even reproach her in the harshest and most undutiful language.

Little Godfrey was just the reverse of all this. He loved his parents most tenderly, and delighted to obey them in every particular. Conse-

quently he was far happier himself, and made all around him happy.

One afternoon, Ulrich's mother had directed him to do some little piece of work which was not quite agreeable to him, and the bad boy as usual flew into a passion, and called his mother several hard names. The poor woman wept as if she would break her heart, but this only made him rage more furiously. At last, giving his mother a look more like that of a wild beast than a son, he dashed out of the house, muttering to himself that he would never return again. This was as foolish as it was wicked, for the silly child had no place where he could live for any length of time; and he might have known that his father, whose temper was as violent as his own, and who was often in drink, would soon drag him back home, besides chastising him. But people in a passion seldom stop to

consider, and Ulrich hastened away, and began to ascend one of the steep mountain paths. As he advanced, his mind was drawn away, by degrees, to other thoughts. At one moment he would pause to examine the scanty flowers which peeped out from among the rocks; at another, he would stand and listen to the distant waterfall, or the hunter's rifle; and then he would be attracted by the circling flight of the Alpine eagle. Amidst these thoughts his conscience began to whisper to him, "Ulrich, Ulrich, you are a wicked boy! You are breaking the heart of your affectionate mother! Go back, go back!"

As Ulrich sat by a tall cliff, looking westward to where the sun was going behind a range of blue mountains, he thought he heard voices in the winding path above him. "I think I know that voice," said he; "it

must be old Father Simon, coming down to the valley. Poor old man! I wonder that he does not fall and break his neck among these sharp crags." I ought here to mention, that Father Simon was a very aged man, more than eighty years old who used to travel about the mountains with the aid of a little dog; the faithful animal ran before, with a little bell at his collar, and the old man, who was totally blind, felt his way with a long staff, and held a string which was fastened around the dog's neck. But on the day I have mentioned, the poor little dog had been disabled by a large stone which fell upon his back from one of the crags, and Father Simon was forced to sit down and wait some hours for assistance. It was indeed his voice which Ulrich heard, but to whom was he speaking? Ulrich listened, and soon perceived that it

was a child's voice, and a moment after, as the blind man came into sight, by turning a corner, Ulrich saw that he was guided by his playmate, little Godfrey. "Step this way, Father Simon," said the kind little boy, as he helped the poor old man along. "Now lean on my shoulder, and put your right foot down into this hollow." "May Heaven reward you, my dear boy," said the old man; "happy are the parents who have such a son. My poor sightless eyes cannot behold your face, but I hear the gentle tones of your voice. I am weary; let us rest for a few moments here, where the ground seems level." So saying, Father Simon slowly bent his aged limbs, and sat down by the side of a rock. At the same moment Godfrey recognised his neighbour Ulrich, who was seated a few paces off, and whom he was rejoiced to meet.

I have said that Ulrich was in no very pleasant state of mind. Conscience was piercing him for his filial ingratitude; and at such a moment to see his friend Godfrey engaged in an act of kindness made him feel still more guilty. He could not help saying to himself, "See what Godfrey is doing for that old man. He is kinder to a poor stranger than I am to my own mother. Indeed, I must be a very wicked boy." As these thoughts passed in his mind, he drew near to the others, and Godfrey told Father Simon that this was one of his friends and play mates. "Well, my children," said Father Simon, "if you will rest with me here for a short time, I will try to say something to you which may be useful. This little boy has been very kind to a poor old blind man. he has perhaps saved my life, for since I have lost my faithful Argus

I have no friend left, and I might have lain and perished on the mountain. My child, God sees and approves such conduct, and he will reward it. The command of God is, *'Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man.'* I hope you remember what became of the youth who cried after an old prophet, 'Go up, thou bald head!' When I find a child who is very kind to poor and aged persons, I feel sure that he is affectionate and obedient to his parents."

Ulrich felt very badly when he heard this, for it seemed as if the old man had known what was passing in his mind. Father Simon went on to say: "I often say these things to young people, because I remember with sorrow many things I might have done for my parents when I was a child; and I think of them the more because Providence has left

me in my old age without son, or grandson, to take care of me. Children, mark my words: if you desire to lead happy lives, obey your parents; love them, honour them, and serve them. Never let the evil one tempt you to give them a harsh word or an angry look."

Little Godfrey looked up, and said, "Father Simon, I think none but a very wicked boy could be cross to his dear father and mother." Ulrich's face became as red as crimson at these words, because he knew that he was just such a boy. Father Simon went on to say: "If you wish to make your parents happy in their old age, take pains to please them in every way. *'A wise son maketh a glad father; but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.'* They are the best friends you can ever have in this world; never let your conduct give them pain. *'A foolish son is a*

grief to his father, and a bitterness to her that bare him.' When parents become old and weak, their greatest comfort is in their children; be sure to attend to their wishes. '*Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old.*' For if you should grow up in wickedness, and treat your parents with contempt, you will fall under that awful curse: '*The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.*' The whole course of God's providence will be as much against you, as if the birds of prey which you see every day in these mountains were to turn against you, and tear you with their talons."

Here the old man, being somewhat rested, arose, and taking Godfrey's hand, proceeded on his way. Ulrich sat still under the rock; he was agi

tated and alarmed, so that his limbs trembled. At length he suddenly arose, and said to himself, "I will go back to my mother." He quickened his steps, as he saw that night was coming on, and soon reached his father's cottage. As he went along, he thought a great deal about what he should say to his offended parent. He slowly lifted the latch, and found her sitting in her little room mending his clothes. Her eyes were red with weeping, and she was so grieved by his conduct that she hid her face in her hands, and was unable to speak. O, what a return was this for a mother's love and kindness! Ulrich was moved to tears. He fell upon her neck, and begged her forgiveness. She put her arms round him, and forgetting all his unkind looks and reproachful words, pressed him to her bosom. Ulrich promised to love and obey her, and if at any time

he felt for a moment disposed to be angry or sullen, he remembered the promises and tears of that day, and the words of Father Simon.

Your affectionate brother,

JAMES.

LETTER III.

LIFE IS SHORT.

My dear brother,—Life has been compared to the flight of swift ships, and of an eagle hastening to the prey. It is a span, a hand's breadth, a dream. This is the account which the Scriptures give of human life, and if you will consider it, you will see much in it to make you alter your present course of conduct. When a youth looks forward, he almost always thinks of long life. He thinks somewhat in this way.

“I am now thirteen, or fifteen, or seventeen years old, (as the case may be.) In so many years more I shall be of age. Then I shall be my own master. I will do so and so ; I will try such and such schemes ; I shall be happy.”

Mistaken boy ! How different from this does life seem to the old man ! *He* looks back, and says to himself : “It was but the other day that I was a boy. I was then full of hope. Life seemed a long and flowery path. I have mistaken it. It is a short journey, through a vale of tears.”

From this, we all learn to say with Moses in the ninetieth psalm : “So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”

Is life short ? Then, my dear brother, whatever you have to do in life ought to be done soon. You ought to begin at once. If you were

put to a hard task, and an hour-glass were put by you, and you were told, "This sand runs out exactly in an hour, and at the end of the hour I will come to see whether you have done your task;"—how anxious would you be not to lose a moment! Just as anxious should you now be to make a good use of your time. If the whole of life is but a span, then the little portions of it, which we call childhood, youth, middle age, old age, are short indeed. The little portion of youth will soon be over; yet in this very season you are laying a foundation for all the rest of your days. If the young twig grows crooked, the full grown bough will have the same direction. Think of this.

Youth is the gathering time. You must now be busy in laying up useful knowledge for time to come. Youth is the seed-time. If the

farmer lets the time of sowing pass by, he will have no harvest in summer, and must starve. If you do not fix in your mind the seeds of truth and wisdom now, you will be ignorant and foolish when you grow to be a man, if you ever do become a man. For you must never forget, that multitudes never reach manhood.

Every thing you do, however trifling it may seem, has its bearing upon your future life. You will reap as you sow, and every moment you are sowing some good or some evil. It seems to you no great matter to trifle away an afternoon; but you are thereby getting a habit of idleness—you are losing just so much of life—you are letting just so much sand run down without attending to your task.

The great thing for which you were made is, to please God, and to

enjoy his love. Life is short; therefore, do not put off the service of God until to-morrow. If life is so short, you ought to give God the *whole* of it. Surely, you will not rob him of the spring of your days—the very best part of them. He has as much right to this day as to the morrow; he demands your youth as well as your old age. Follow the example of our adorable Redeemer, who said, “I must work the works of him that sent me while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work.” This is what few boys think much of; but those who do are wiser and happier when they become older; and none enjoy life so much as those who have early given their affections to Christ.

Your affectionate brother,

JAMES.

LETTER IV.

HOLIDAYS.

My dear brother,—I well remember how much I used to think of holidays when I was a boy. But it pains me to consider how much of this precious time was altogether wasted. But you will say, “Must we study all the time? May we never play?”

Surely, I do not mean this. No one can be a greater friend to recreation than myself. I consider it not only harmless, but absolutely necessary. But what I mean is, that even in play one should not be foolish or unreasonable. There is such a thing as being profitably employed, at the same time that one is entertained. And there is a certain way of spending

ing holidays so as to get neither profit nor recreation.

Gustavus was a schoolmate of mine, and a more idle lad I never knew. Half his time seemed to be spent in lounging over his books, yawning, stretching, and wishing that the play-hour had come. But how did he use this time of recreation when it came? I think I see him even now. When the Saturday afternoon, or any of the regular holidays came, *Gustavus* seemed as much at a loss as when he was at his desk in the school-room. He had no plan laid out, no arrangements made for his sports or exercise. Now, I like a boy to have some method even in his play. *Gustavus* used to saunter along the road on his way homeward, as if he scarcely knew what to do with himself. Then he would put away his books, and come out again. What he was going to do

next he could not tell. Sometimes he would lie under the trees, or hang upon the gate, or lounge in the lanes, waiting for some of the other boys to come along. Gustavus was thus more uncomfortable than if he had been at his books. And at the end of a holiday, he used to feel more exhausted and worn out, than his younger brother who had been working in the field. There is no profit in such holidays as these: they encourage idleness and irresolution. You need not be idle even at your plays.

Take another picture of another boy. *Matthen* went to the same school. While he was at his desk he was always employed, and scarcely ever looked away from his lesson. His whole soul was engaged in it. But when school was out, and books put away, there was not a livelier fellow in the whole school than Mat-

thew : holidays were full of pleasure to him, and full of profit, too. He always had something planned beforehand. Sometimes he had formed a party to climb the neighbouring mountains, or to build a fort in the edge of the woods, or to visit some of the villages ; sometimes he used to work for hours with the carpenter's tools which his uncle had given him ; and thus he received exercise as well as amusement. But what he chiefly loved was to go with his father to walk in the woods, and gather flowers, and learn the names of trees, plants, and minerals.

You will now be able to understand me, when I say, *do not waste your holidays*. One of the most important ways of spending them, is in taking active exercise,—a wholesome game at ball, or an hour's ride on a good horse, will fit you for studying so much the better when you return

to your lessons. It is a duty for us to take care of our health. Many persons ruin their health in youth; and then it is almost impossible to live either comfortably or usefully.

Visits to your friends may also be paid in your holidays. It is a good sign for boys to be fond of accompanying their mothers and sisters in their visits. Thus they learn good manners, and escape that clownishness which is apt to grow upon students. When I see a boy ready on every knock at the door to sneak out of the room, I naturally conclude that he will never be a well-bred man. And this is more important than you might think at first; for when young men grow up, they need and desire some society. And if they have become so foolishly bashful, or disgracefully awkward, as to shrink from the society of their mothers and sisters, they will be very

apt to go out into bad company
Lastly, whatever you do, do it upon
principle, do it conscientiously, and
you will never regret it.

I am your affectionate brother,

JAMES.

LETTER V.

AMUSEMENTS.

My dear brother,—You will not be displeased if I devote another letter or two to the subject of recreation and amusement. This is not so trifling a matter as some people might suppose. All young persons are fond of play, and more than this, something of the sort is absolutely necessary. As the proverb says, “the bow must not be always bent,”—and the more diligent a boy is at his books, the more he needs relaxation. This

is not only important for the preservation of health, but for preserving the activity and strength of the mind. Constant application, without rest or pastime, wears the mind, and leads to dulness and despondency.

It is very common to leave boys entirely to themselves in the choice of their amusements; but this is not right; for all plays are not alike good, and there are some which are highly injurious and improper. There are three things which you should have in view in every game or sport: It should be full of *entertainment*; it should be altogether *innocent*; and it should be *of some use* to body or mind. The first requisite, that is entertainment, you will readily seek and find; but boys are not so careful to amuse themselves in a profitable, or even a harmless way. Let me call your attention to some of the amusements which are common.

First of all, I persuade myself that you will never think of playing *cards*. I should wish you never to know even the name of a playing-card. Games of this kind are all games of hazard or chance. They do not benefit the mind, they waste precious time, and, above all, they lead directly to the ruinous vice of gambling. Every play in which dice are used is, in some degree, a game of hazard; and such amusements conduct the inexperienced to gambling. *Draughts*, or *chequers*, is a game of skill; but I never could see it to be of much use to the mind, and it certainly affords no advantages to the body. Indeed, all sedentary games of this sort seem unsuitable for youth, because they keep the players within doors, while they might be employed in taking healthful exercise. The game of *chess* is liable also to the last of these objections, although it has

been approved by many judicious persons. I certainly do not regard it as evil in itself, and it may be true that it encourages thought, and exercises the mind to a certain extent. But its fascinations are such, that most who are fond of it waste many precious hours at the chess-board. It often takes up a great length of time, and those who become expert are frequently tempted to try other games, and so become gamblers at length. Besides, I could never find it so clearly beneficial to the mind as has been pretended. Some of the most wonderful chess-players I have ever seen, have been persons of very feeble understanding and limited reasoning powers. In a word, I would recommend to you to abstain from all games which keep you sitting still, and yield no direct improvement.

You are rather too big a boy to engage in the trifling sports of child-

ren. Such I consider *marbles*. I am always mortified to see large boys at this pastime. It brings one into bad company, is often connected with a sort of gaming, and at best is somewhat a grovelling business, without any pretence of being useful.

There are other recreations which are good or bad, according to the way in which they are used. Such are *wrestling* and *boxing*. These are highly useful to the limbs, affording them exercise and strength. But then care must be taken to avoid all danger, and especially to shun every disposition towards fighting and bullying. I fear it will generally be found that good boxers are apt to become quarrelsome.

You will, no doubt, expect me to say something about what are called the sports of the field. Among these I include *angling*, or fishing with the hook and line. It is certainly

delightful to stroll along pleasant brooks, and to recline on the green, shaded banks, in fine summer weather. And in the pursuit of this sport, it is always pleasing to witness the increase of one's skill, and the corresponding success. Where it is pursued for the sake of obtaining food, it is undoubtedly a reasonable and useful employment. But when boys go a fishing, their sole object is amusement, and their amusement is a cruel one. The baiting with live worms, which writhe upon the barbed hook, and the mangling of the harmless fry which are caught, are surely bad lessons of humanity for tender youth. Some persons will call these objections weak and womanlike. But where amusements are so abundant, without the necessity of harming any living thing, I cannot see the need of seeking so barbarous an enjoyment ; and in those

respects in which the female sex excels, I am very willing to be considered feminine.

My objections are still greater to *fowling*, or gunning, as an amusement for boys. There is no sport in which they become so enthusiastic, and there are few which are more injurious. Not to speak of the lamentable accidents which are constantly occurring with fire-arms; there is here a greater cruelty than even in angling. If every bird at which you discharged your piece were killed on the spot, there might be less reason for this remark. But how many poor fluttering things are merely wounded, and left to linger for hours or days in mortal anguish. I can never forget the impressions made upon me in my childhood, by the touching lines of Burns, upon seeing a wounded hare limp along his path:

Inhuman man ! shame on thy barbarous art,
And blasted be thy murder-aiming eye ;
May never pity soothe thee with a sigh ;
Nor ever pleasure glad thy cruel heart.

Go live, poor wanderer of the wood and field,
The bitter little that of life remains ;
No more the thickening brakes and verdant plains
To thee shall home or food or pastime yield.

Seek, mangled wretch, some place of wonted rest,
No more of rest, but now thy dying bed ;
The sheltering rushes whistling o'er thy head ;
The cold earth with thy bloody bosom press'd.

Oft as by winding Nith I musing wait
The sober eve, or hail the cheerful dawn,
I'll miss thee sporting o'er the dewy lawn,
And curse the ruffian's aim, and mourn thy hapless
fate.

Whole days are commonly consumed in this sport, and there are many young men who become so fond of it as to make it their principal employment. Without enlarging upon the reasons why it is so, I will state it as a fact, which I have long observed, that young men who are

devoted to dogs and guns usually become idle and dissipated.

But you will be ready to say, ‘You are only telling me what pastimes I must *not* indulge in; name some which you recommend.’ This I propose to do in my next communication. In the mean time, let me give you one important rule, which applies to the whole subject: *Let amusement always occupy its proper time.* Its time is when the mind needs refreshment, when it has been jaded by application. Never make a business of play—never spend whole days upon mere recreation. Be moderate in all enjoyments of this kind, and avoid every thing that is frivolous and childish. Remember that we are just as accountable for our relaxation as for any thing else; and we ought, therefore, to be as conscientious in it. Farewell.

Your affectionate brother,

JAMES.

LETTER VI.

BODILY EXERCISE.

My dear brother,—You are not to suppose, from my objections to certain plays and games, that there are no suitable recreations. Indeed, my difficulty in writing to you this morning, is, that there are so many, I scarcely know where to begin, or which to choose. There are amusements which are good for the body, or the mind, or for both. Let us consider a few of these.

Healthful exercise is part of the duty of every day. The divine Maker and Master of these bodies requires that we should take good care of them. Young persons engaged in study are liable to diseases which arise from want of exercise. No day should pass, therefore, with-

out sufficient employment of the limbs and muscles. And those exercises are best which give strength to the body, and at the same time give recreation to the mind. If you amuse yourself without muscular action, you will be puny and weak of limb; and if you take ever so much exercise without delight, you will become dull and melancholy. Try to accomplish both ends at once.

For example, *riding on horseback* is a noble exercise for boys. It is an indispensable part of a manly education. It is one of the best means of preserving health. To manage a spirited horse is quite an attainment for a young man; tending to produce high cheerfulness and courage. In many ways which I cannot stop to name, it may be very useful in your future life. And you will never be an independent rider,

unless you become such in your boyhood.

Walking may be used when one cannot ride. But walking takes more time, and often fatigues before it has sufficiently excited the circulation, and revived the spirits. Neither can you survey so great a variety of scenes on foot as on horseback. Let me own, however, that the great Dr. Franklin considered walking the very best sort of exercise. It should be pursued for at least two hours every day, by those who study closely. Pedestrian excursions are of great benefit. In this way hundreds of the students at the German universities spend their vacations, sometimes travelling over all Switzerland.

Whether you walk or ride, however, you should have a companion, otherwise your thoughts will be apt

still to busy themselves with the books you have left. Try to have some object in view, in your walk or ride. Visit a friend—seek out some natural curiosity—make yourself familiar with every hill and valley, every nook and corner, of the whole township and county. In process of time, extend your researches to your own State, and then to other States. Or make collections in mineralogy and botany, that you may be gaining science as well as health. Thus you will become a traveller, and *judicious travel* is the most profitable, as it is certainly the most agreeable of all recreations.

Swimming, rowing, and skating are manly sports, and conducive to health when practised with discretion. The first in particular is essential to a good education; for as you read in Thomson,

“Life is oft preserved
By the bold swimmer, in the swift illapse
Of accident disastrous.”

I say nothing about trap-ball, cricket, shinny, (sometimes called bandy,) quoits, and the like, because the only danger is that you already do too much at them. They are all good, when used at proper times, in proper places, and with proper care; but no one of them conduces to any immediate benefit, beyond the exercise and amusement. Not so with *manual labour*. This, after all, seems to be the true recreation, especially for wintry days, when we have to keep the house. The Jews used to hold, that every lad, however rich, should be bred to a trade. A little skill in *carpentry* is a grand accomplishment. How often have I regretted that I had not gained it. I might now be independent of the joiner, when I

want a new shelf, or when the leg of my table needs to be mended. A *turning lathe* is used by some young friends of mine, with great advantage. Every large school ought to have a good supply of tools, and some one to give lessons to the boys. But even without other tools, you may chop, saw, and split wood, or break up coal, or roll the gravel walks, or ply the wheelbarrow. And when these things are done by boys in concert, nothing can be more entertaining. *Gardening* is so charming a recreation, so innocent, healthful, and profitable, that I might spend a whole letter in writing about it. Take my word for it, if you live to be a man, you will have a peculiar satisfaction in looking at trees or shrubbery which you had put in the earth many years before. And in our climate, where trees for shade are so valuable, you cannot discharge

your duty to society, if you do not occasionally plant a linden, or locust, or an elm which may refresh your fellow men when you shall have departed. I am the more earnest about this, because I have to walk daily through a street, upon which the noontide sun pours his beams, much to my discomfort. If I had set out trees twenty years ago, as I might have done, how different would my walks be! Look at the shaded promenade before the State House in Philadelphia, or Temple street in New Haven, or Bond street in New York, or the Mall in Boston, and you will feel the force of my advice. The cultivation of valuable fruit trees and plants may be made a source of profit as well as of pleasure.

But I have filled my sheet, and yet am not half done with the subject. Adieu, my dear boy; but remember,

in recreation, no less than in labour, to keep a conscience void of offence towards God and towards man.

Your affectionate brother,
JAMES



LETTER VII.

EARLY RISING.

My dear brother,—In the course of my reading I am always glad to meet with any thing which strikes me as suitable for your instruction. This morning I opened upon a page of Mr. Jay's works, in which he speaks of *early rising*, and his thoughts are so excellent, that I shall make free use of them, and mingle them with my own.

The habit of early rising, if ever formed, is commonly established in childhood or youth. If one has

wasted the delightful morning hours of fifteen years in bed, he will not readily learn to deny himself; therefore, I wish you *now* to learn to enjoy

“The cool, the fragrant, and the silent morn,
To meditation due, and sacred song.”

Perhaps you are ready to ask how much sleep is necessary? This cannot be answered in a word. Some need more than others. But Mr. Jay says, “It is questionable whether they require *much* more. Yea, it may be questioned whether they require *any* more, as to length. What they want more of, is *better* sleep; and the quality would be improved by lessening the quantity.” This remark used to be often made by the celebrated and excellent Dr. Benjamin Rush. Try the experiment of shortening your slumbers; you will have fewer dreams, fewer turnings and tossings

but more solid repose, more refreshment.

But you must shorten your rest at the right end; not by sitting up late at night, but by rising early in the morning. Physicians say, that one hour's sleep before midnight is worth more than two hours' after it. However this may be, one hour of study before breakfast is certainly worth two after supper. The mind is more fresh and cheerful, and the health is less injured. And then, how much more delightful are the early hours! The poet says truly,

“Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet,
With charm of earliest birds.”

In the delightful months of spring, summer, and autumn, you should be up at sunrise. When the vapours begin to disperse, you will observe all nature bedewed with sweetness. Fresh odours breathe

from the woods, and fields, and gardens. A thousand birds are singing in the branches. The morning walk among such scenes is as useful to the health as it is pleasing to the taste.

It is time that you should begin to care for your health, and take measures to secure strength for future usefulness. The advantage of early rising, as it regards this, will be apparent in your vigour, your appetite, your nerves, your spirits, your complexion. Ask your physician. Is there a medical man on earth that would risk his reputation by a contrary opinion? Sinclair, in his volumes on health and long life, remarks, that though those who lived to a very great age differed in many things, they all resembled each other here. There was not one who did not rise early.

Whatever business you may ever be engaged in, will be furthered by

early rising. What an advantage has a student from this habit in planning and arranging his pursuits for the day! in despatching what requires haste, whether reading or writing! and in having leisure for any incidental engagement, without putting every thing else into disorder! While another who is disposed to cry out, "A little more sleep, and a little more slumber," and who begins at ten what he should have begun at six, is thrown into hurry and confusion; bustles forward to overtake himself; feels himself a drudge all day; and at night is weary, without having accomplished his task. All this is so well known, that those very people who love to lie in bed themselves are very strict in causing their servants to rise in good season; and among all active, business men, a man's reputation suffers from the want of this virtue.

The heathen used to say, *Morning is the friend to the muses*. It surely is a friend to the graces. If it is the best time for study, it is also the best time for devotion. When prayer and praise are neglected in the morning, they are commonly neglected all day; and if you let the world get the start of your soul in the morning, you will seldom overtake it all day. Morning devotion sweetens every succeeding hour, pours a balm on the conscience, gives a pleasant savour to business, locks the door against wicked thoughts, and furnishes matter for pious reflection.

It is better to go from prayer to business than from business to prayer. Intercourse with God prepares for intercourse with our fellow creatures, and for every event, whether pleasing or painful. *Boerhaave*, the celebrated physician, rose early in the morning, and through his life his practice was

to retire an hour for private prayer and meditation. *Col. Gardiner*, even when in camp, used to spend two hours of the early morning in religious exercises. The great *Judge Hale*, too, rose early, and retired for prayer, and read a portion of God's word, without which, he said, nothing prospered with him all day. *Howard*, the philanthropist, was an early riser. *John Wesley* usually slept five hours ; and for many years, he, and all the first Methodist preachers, had a public service at five in the morning. *President Dwight* was in the habit of studying before day for a large portion of his life. And there was in one of our southern States, a labouring man who, by devoting two hours of every morning to study, before he went to his work, became a learned theologian.

If you have already acquired the disgraceful habit of lying in bed late

in the morning, break it off now, not *gradually*, but *at once*. Do not regard the little unpleasant feelings you may have to endure for a few weeks. Go forth, and inhale the fragrance of the charming spring and autumnal mornings; it will be a cordial to your body and your mind. And in the summer, the season from early dawn until breakfast is the only time you can enjoy a book, a walk or ride in the open air. Let me give you *Milton's* account of the way in which he used to pass his morning hours. "Those morning haunts," says this great poet, "are where they ought to be—at home; not sleeping or concocting the surfeits of an irregular feast, but up and stirring; in winter, often ere the sound of any bell awake men to labour or devotion; in summer, as oft with the bird that first rouses, or not much tardier, to read good authors, or cause them to

be read, till the attention be weary, or memory have its full freight; then with useful and generous labours preserving the body's health and hardiness, to render lightsome, clear, and not lumpish obedience to the mind, to the cause of religion and our country's liberty."

I have written to you more than once, concerning the example of our adorable Saviour; and I wish the chief object of these letters may be, to set this blessed example more fully before you. Now, what do you suppose was our Lord's practice? Just imagine to yourself the way in which he spent his morning hours. Can you for an instant suppose that he passed them in slumbers upon his couch? When the hum of business began among the labourers of Judea or of Galilee, and the sun shone warmly on the fields and villages, was the Redeemer asleep? Is

it possible for you to think so? No, it is not. On a certain occasion, we read, *And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed*; and yet he had been greatly occupied the whole of the day preceding this. We think little of time, but he never passed an idle hour. The language of the whole of his life was, *I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is yet day: the night cometh, wherein no man can work*. Yet he was really a man. He took our infirmities, and wearied nature required repose; but he distinguished between what was necessary and what was needless; and it may be also said of his whole life, "*He pleased not himself.*"

Your affectionate brother,

JAMES.

LETTER VIII.

THE HABIT OF DILIGENCE.

My dear brother,—Not long ago I wrote to you about the importance of forming right habits, and I then said a little upon the subject of diligence. I now wish to write to you more particularly concerning this matter, for this is the time in which you must form the habit of application, if you ever do.

Think how valuable a thing knowledge is. If you take two boys of the same age, one from an Indian tribe, and the other from an intelligent family of Christians, you will observe an amazing difference. I do not mean the difference in their looks, and clothing, and manners, but in their minds. One will be ignorant of almost every thing that is useful.

The other will know a thousand things upon a great many subjects. Such is the effect of education. When one of the ancient philosophers was asked what was the use of knowledge, he answered, "Take two men, one educated and the other uneducated, and let them be cast naked upon a foreign coast, and you will see the difference which knowledge makes."

There are many things which we learn without much trouble, by hearing our parents and friends talk about them. But in order to be truly learned, so as to be most useful, we must apply ourselves to study. Many boys are too apt to look upon their lessons as mere tasks. They take no pleasure in learning them, and are glad when they are free from them, in order that they may go and play. This is because they do not consider what a precious thing know-

ledge is. If they considered this, they would be delighted whenever they have an opportunity to learn any thing. Let me mention two cases. *Joseph* is a boy of my acquaintance, who has very good talents, and has been sent to school from his infancy. His father has given him the best teachers, and furnished him with all the books that he needs. But still he makes scarcely any improvement. He takes his book, and opens it, and looks at the pages, but seems always ready to fall asleep over it. It is a tiresome business to him. Then he becomes so weary that he frets and grows peevish, looks about the room, plays with his knife and pencil, talks with those who sit next to him, and when he rises to recite, is shamefully unprepared. He hates his books, and is sorry when the hour comes for him to go. He learns nothing, and is a

mere idler. What is the reason? He never thinks of the use of knowledge. He does not consider that this is the very best time for him to get knowledge. Perhaps no one has ever told him how sorry and ashamed he will be, when he grows up, and finds that he knows scarcely anything. Joseph has been so negligent that he has formed a habit of idleness. This habit has grown very strong. His teacher promised him a beautiful book, if he would get one lesson perfectly. Joseph thought he was sure of the prize, and that he could get the lesson in an hour. So he could, easily, if it had not been for this habit of idleness. For two or three minutes he would fix his eye on his book, and seemed to study very hard. But then the old habit would begin to work; he would look off to see what his next neighbour was doing, and before long, he would

catch himself playing with the string of his sachel, or cutting notches on his slate-frame. Then he would get back to his book, but in a minute or two he would have forgotten all about it. Joseph got no prize, and I am afraid he will be an ignorant boy as long as he lives.

Benjamin is of the same age, and in the same class, but he is a very different boy. He knows that it gives his dear parents very great pleasure when he is attentive to his tasks. He has often heard of the value of time, and that when it is lost it can never be recovered. And he is sure that the more he studies now, the wiser he will be when he grows up to be a man, if his life should be spared. For these reasons he is very careful to learn as much as he can. He loves his books, and feels pleasure at every new thing which he is taught. He is never

idle, but spends the whole of his school-hours in getting his lessons. It is no burden to him to learn, but rather a pleasure; and he is more cheerful and happy when he is at hard study, than the boys around him who are whispering, or playing, or nodding over their books. Benjamin has formed a habit of diligence. It is as natural to him to study when he is at school, as to eat when he is at table. He knows every lesson perfectly, and gratifies his parents when he goes home, by telling them how many pleasant things he has learned. If Benjamin lives to be a man, he will have a great deal of useful knowledge. For any one who loves to learn will certainly become learned. This habit of application will be likely to stick to him all his life, and he will be learning something good as long as he lives. Now, I wish you to choose between these

two boys, and find out which of them you would like to resemble. And whatever habits you *now* form, I think you will always keep.

If you have been so unhappy as to neglect this, and have already fallen into any bad habits, I beg that you will try, with all your might, to get rid of them. This is often very hard; for it is more difficult to unlearn what is bad, than to learn what is good. But it must be done; and the sooner the better. Even small things are important, when they become habitual. Plato, the Grecian philosopher, once rebuked a young man very severely for playing with dice. "Why do you rebuke me so severely," said the youth, "for so small a matter?" Plato replied, "It is no small matter to form a habit." While you have your books before you, try to think of nothing else. If you find yourself

beginning to be weary, rouse your mind by thinking of the value of time, the use of learning, and especially your duty to God.

Habit will make those things easy which at first seem very hard. By constant practice men become able to do astonishing works. There is a story in ancient books of a man whose strength was so great, that he could carry an ox upon his shoulders. When he was asked how he acquired such power, he said it was by this means: he took the animal when it was a young calf, and lifted it every day, till it grew to this size; and by constant practice his strength grew as the calf grew. You may believe the tale or not, just as you choose; but it is a good illustration of the power of constant practice. It is much the same in learning. In arithmetic, for instance, it is astonishing how some young people

will improve by practice. If you were to take a long page in a merchant's ledger, it would take you fifteen minutes to add it up; but your father would run his finger up the row of figures, and tell you the sum in less than two minutes. This is because he is practising it every day. I know many persons who never think of using a slate for any of the common questions in arithmetic; they have the habit of working them all in their head. So also in composition. When you sit down to write a letter, it takes you a long time to think what to put down. You bite your pen, and muse and ponder, and take a great while to fill half a page. But your sister writes on, as fast as her pen will move, and never stops until she has covered the whole sheet. All these things should encourage you to be

very much in earnest, and to study diligently, and acquire the habit of using every hour to the best advantage

There are many young persons who would give all they have in the world for the advantages which you possess. They have no books, no friends to teach them, and no money to pay for schooling. If they were in your place, they would go forward with rapid steps. Some poor boys who have laboured under all these difficulties, have, nevertheless, become very learned men. In order to excite your mind, I intend, before long, to give you the history of some of these. In the mean time, my dear brother, *be diligent*. Do every part of your duty *with all your might*. When you *play*, do it heartily, and take as much pleasure in it as you choose; but when you study, do

it in good earnest, and do nothing else.

Your affectionate brother,

JAMES.



LETTER IX.

LEARN SOMETHING EVERY HOUR.

My dear brother,—You must not suppose, from what I said in my last letter, that the school is the only place where you can acquire knowledge. I would by no means have you to play all the time that you are not employed at your tasks. There are a great many hours, especially in these long winter evenings, in which you may be filling your mind with something useful. For this purpose you should always have some instructive book at hand. Your parents have many such books, and

are always glad to give you the use of them. It makes me sorry to see that you read so much in mere story books. Some of these indeed are useful, and they are liked by all young people ; but most of them are foolish, if not injurious. Boys often become so fond of this sort of reading, that they never look into any but tales and novels. And in this way they weaken their minds, and lose all the advantage they might gain from books of instruction. Now, if you did but think of it, you would find out that there are works which are highly entertaining, at the same time that they are profitable. I mean books of history, voyages and travels, biography, natural history, and philosophical experiments. If you were once to taste the pleasantness of these, you would soon throw away your story books, which are mostly fit only for the nursery.

But you cannot be always reading, and it is by no means necessary. There are many other ways of getting useful knowledge. The greater part of what you already know, you have learned from hearing your father and mother talking. If all they have told you should be written down, it would fill a multitude of volumes. And you remember this much better than if you had read it in a book. You ought, therefore, to learn something every day from your parents. They are always willing to teach you; and whenever you have any difficulty, you should get them to explain it. There are a thousand things which they would be delighted to tell you, and which you would be glad to learn. Whenever you are sitting with them, try to get them to instruct you. You may do the same thing with all your friends. If you are only modest and

respectful, they will not consider you too inquisitive. All sensible people are gratified when they see that boys are desirous to learn. Make it a rule to learn something from every-body ; for there is no one, high or low, who has not some knowledge which might do you good. For instance, you have friends in the school who come from different parts of the country. You may gain much information from them, by inquiring concerning the places where they live, and getting them to describe to you every thing that is remarkable in their own neighbourhoods. Even the tradesmen and mechanics can instruct you in many little matters relating to their own employments. It is a great advantage for a man to know something about every different trade and mechanic art, and you cannot learn this from books so well as from

going into the workshops, and asking questions of the people who are at work. When they see that you really wish to be informed, they will be glad to answer all your inquiries. I should like you to know all the particulars about every kind of trade and manufacture.

And then, when you go into the country, it will make your excursions much more pleasant if you will take pains to learn from farmers every thing about the cultivation of the earth. You must be sure to find out as much as you can about the different operations of agriculture; sowing, reaping, and the like; and about the productions of the land, the raising of cattle and sheep, and the ways of improving the soil. You will find that many husbandmen, who have not read as much as yourself, have a great treasure of knowledge and wisdom. Sometimes you

will fall into the company of those who have travelled in foreign countries. This will give you a fine opportunity to learn from them all you wish to know about the parts of the world which they have visited. And if you travel about in your holidays, you must keep your eyes open to every thing that is remarkable, and learn all about the places through which you pass. In old times this was the principal way of acquiring knowledge. Instead of going to colleges and universities, the ancient Greeks used to travel for years together in Asia and Egypt, and other lands. This is the method which was pursued by Lycurgus, and Pythagoras, and Plato, and others of whom your histories tell you. When you go to a strange place, you must endeavour to find out whatever is curious, and to make inquiries of all your friends.

There are a great many common things which we see every day, that are very curious. Many boys carry watches for months and years without knowing at all what it is that makes them go. *Charles Harvey* had a watch given to him the day he was fifteen years old. He was much pleased with the present, but could not feel satisfied until he went to the watchmaker, and got him to explain the inside of it. The watchmaker took the watch to pieces, and showed him all the works. He showed him the *steel spring* wound up in a coil, and let him see how it was constantly trying to unwind itself and get loose. Then he showed him the *barrel* to which the end of the spring is fastened, and how the working of the spring makes the barrel move round and round. He pointed out the *chain* which goes from the barrel to the *great wheel*.

and *fusee*, and told him how one wheel moved another, till the *hands* were made to go round. But you cannot understand this by writing. If you ask your father, he will explain all these works to you in a few minutes.

Some boys are so careless that they make no inquiries, and never learn any thing of value. I knew a boy who used to go to a mill every few days, but who never had the curiosity to ask how it was that the water falling on the great wheel could make the mill-stone turn round: and lads will often own guns without ever finding out how the lock is formed, or how the trigger moves the other works, or how the gunpowder or the shot is made. I hope it will not be so with you, but that whenever you see any machine, you will not rest until you know all about it. When you are next on board of

a steamboat, get some one to explain to you how the steam works. Inquire about the boiler, and the condenser, and the piston, and the valves. Find out the way in which the pump in the yard raises the water, and what it is that makes the mercury rise and fall in the thermometer.

The great thing is to be always inquiring. *Ask and you will learn.* Learn something every hour. Remember the little story of *Eyes and no Eyes*, and read *Travels about Home*.* Whenever you take a walk, you may be learning something. You ought to be able to tell the name of every kind of tree in the woods, either by the bark and leaves, or by the shape, and the way they look at a distance. You may easily find out the names of the principal

* Both these works are among the publications of the American Sunday-school Union.

plants and flowers which grow in the fields. It will be a shame if you grow up without knowing how to tell one bird from another, by their shape, their plumage, their song, or their manner of flying. When you come to look more sharply, you will discover a great many curious differences in the mosses and the ragged lichens which grow on the fences and stones, and look like mould. This is the way to become a philosopher. A philosopher is a lover of wisdom. The reason why some men become philosophers is, that they are always inquiring and learning something every hour. It was thus that Dr. Franklin became so celebrated, and discovered the nature of thunder and lightning, which no one knew before. I have read also of poor shepherd's boys, who have become great philosophers in the same way.

If you are only determined to be learning something all the time, there is no doubt that you will be constantly improving. When your friends see this they will help you, and be glad to instruct you. They will put you in the way of making experiments for yourself, and will furnish you with books and instruments. Thus your very amusements will be full of profit. I am sure that you would find far more entertainment in trying experiments with a little electrical machine than in playing at ball or marbles. And at the same time you would be learning an important science. You might spend an hour or two in a printing office, learning the way in which books are made, and be much more amused than by running about the play-ground.

So you see that even when you are not in school you may be constantly improving your mind. You can-

not open your eyes anywhere, without beholding something to inquire about; and the more inquiries you make, the more you will know. This makes one great difference between people; some are anxious to learn, while others do not care whether they learn or not. Be awake, my dear brother, and remember that time is short, and that you must give an account of the way in which you spend every moment. The greater your knowledge is, the more useful may you be to your fellow creatures.

Your affectionate brother,
JAMES.

LETTER X.

THE THREE SELF-TAUGHT SCOTCH
LADS.

My lear brother,—You have good teachers and parents who delight in giving you all the books and all the instructions which you need. For these favours you ought to be thankful to your heavenly Father; and this should make you more diligent than you have ever been before. I wish to give you some account, at this time, of the way in which certain young persons, without your advantages, became truly learned. I hope that when you see how much progress they made, with every thing against them, you will be encouraged to greater perseverance and improvement of your time.

Did you ever hear of a man named

Edmund Stone? He was born about a hundred and thirty years ago, in Scotland. Edmund's father was gardener to the Duke of Argyle. This nobleman one day found on the grass a volume of a book called *Newton's Principia*, in Latin, and when he made inquiries, learned that it belonged to young Edmund. He was much astonished to find that his gardener's son could read Latin, or understand mathematics. He said to him, "But how came you by the knowledge of all these things?" "A servant," said the youth, who was then in his eighteenth year, "taught me to read ten years ago. Does one need to know any thing more than the twenty-four letters in order to learn every thing else that one wishes?" The duke was still more surprised; he sat down upon a bank, and received from Edmund the following account:

“I first learned to read,” said he, “when the masons were at work upon your house. I approached them one day, and observed that the architect used a rule and compass, and that he made calculations. I inquired what might be the meaning and use of these things, and I was informed that there was a science called arithmetic, and I learned it. I was told there was another science called geometry; I bought the necessary books, and I learned geometry. By reading, I found that there were good books in these two sciences in Latin; I bought a dictionary, and I learned Latin. I understood, also, that there were good books of the same kind in French; I bought a dictionary, and I learned French. And this, my lord, is what I have done; it seems to me that we may learn every thing when we know the twenty-four letters of the alphabet.” This man afterwards

became well known as an author, and published a number of mathematical works.

I will now give you some account of another young Scotchman who was still more extraordinary. I mean the astronomer *James Ferguson*. He was born in 1710, in Banffshire. His father was a poor but pious day-labourer. James, by hearing his elder brothers taught, learned to read before his father supposed that he knew the letters. When he was seven or eight years old, he began to pay attention to mechanical contrivances, and actually discovered the principles of the lever, and of the wheel and axle. He was employed as a shepherd, and while his flock was feeding around him, he used to spend his time in making little mills, spinning-wheels, and the like. At night he used to busy himself in looking at the stars. He afterwards

was employed by a farmer named Glashan, who was very kind to him. After his day's work, James used to go at night to the fields, with a blanket around him, and a lighted candle, and lie down on his back to examine the stars. "I used," says he, "to stretch a thread with small beads upon it, at arm's length, between my eye and the stars; sliding the beads upon it, till they hid such and such stars from my eye, in order to take their apparent distances from one another; and then laying the thread down on a paper, I marked the stars thereon by the beads." Mr. Gilchrist, the minister, showed him how to draw maps, and gave him compasses, rules, &c. In his twentieth year he went to live in the house of a Mr. Grant, whose butler taught him how to make dials, and also instructed him in arithmetic. After his return to his father's house, he

procured a book of geography, and made a globe of wood, which he covered with paper, and drew a map of the world on it. This he did before he had ever seen an artificial globe. Next he was employed by a miller, and here he lived so poorly, that often his only fare was a little oatmeal and water. After being some time in the service of a physician, he returned home again, in ill-health. Here he made a wooden clock, and then a wooden watch, without the least assistance or instruction. From this he went on and made some dials. Afterwards he became a painter, but still gave most of his time to philosophy; so that in the end he was a distinguished author, and a member of the Royal Society.

Such accounts as these ought to make you ashamed to be idle. If a gardener and a shepherd's boy, in the midst of hard work, could learn

so much without any teachers, how much might you acquire, who have nothing to do but to learn, and have the continual assistance of friends and teachers!

But there is still another Scotchman, whom I shall introduce to your acquaintance, namely, the late *Dr. Alexander Murray*. He was born in the shire of Kirkcudbright, in 1775, and was the son of a shepherd. He learned to write and read at once, for his father used to draw the letters for him on the board of an old *wool-card*, with a bit of burnt stick. Much of his time was passed in writing with coals, and he became wonderfully familiar with the Scriptures. His mother's brother, when he was about nine years old, took him to New Galloway, to school, where he lost his health. For a number of years, his only reading was the Bible, and such penny bal-

lads as are hawked about the streets. In 1787, he read Josephus, and Salmon's geography; he then undertook to teach the children of two farmers, and for a winter's work received sixteen shillings. He then went to school again, and learned arithmetic and book-keeping.

The reading of Salmon's geography had led him to think much about foreign countries, and their languages. "I had," says he, "in 1787 and 1788, often admired and mused on the specimens of the Lord's prayer in every language, found in Salmon's grammar. I had read in the Magazine and Spectator that Homer, Virgil, Milton, Shakspeare, and Newton were the greatest of mankind. I had been early informed that Hebrew was the first language, by some good religious people. In 1789 an old woman showed me her psalm book, which was printed with a large type,

had notes on each page, and likewise what I discovered to be the Hebrew alphabet, marked letter after letter in the 119th psalm. I took a copy of these letters by printing them off in my old way, and kept them." He undertook to teach himself French, and from this he went to the Latin grammar, of which he borrowed a copy from a boy. And this extraordinary child, with hardly any assistance, was pursuing at one time the study of Latin, French, Greek, and Hebrew. But I cannot go on to mention all the languages he learned. There was probably no man living who knew so many, and in all of these he was self-taught. He wrote some of the most learned works which have ever appeared, and died at the early age of thirty-eight. It was his thirst for knowledge and his constant application which made him learned; and this shows the truth

of what I before told you,—that he who is really desirous of acquiring information will always succeed.

I might mention other instances. *William Gifford*, the late learned editor of the *Quarterly Review*, was first a sailor-boy on a coal-vessel, and then a shoemaker. He used to learn mathematics while he was making shoes, and having no pen or paper, he beat out pieces of leather as smooth as possible, and wrought his problems on them with a blunted awl. In the same way he used to write verses. He afterwards became one of the most celebrated scholars. And there are many other such cases which I can point out for your perusal in various books. But I must now conclude, heartily wishing that you may profit by whatever is good in every example.

I am your affectionate brother,

JAMES.

LETTER XI.

THE FORMATION OF HABITS.

My dear brother,—Some of the subjects upon which I intend to address you, will perhaps seem small. Nothing is small, however, or unimportant, which concerns the forming of your habits. You are now forming a character for life, and, as I have intimated in a former letter, ten years hence it will be too late to amend what is done amiss now.

Near the place where I write, a number of men are busied in building a large house. They are carrying up thick walls of solid stone. Now I observe that they are very careful in laying these stones. They are constantly measuring with the rule and the plummet, to make

every part exactly as it should be. And they have reason for this, because, if, six months hence, they should find out that their wall was not perpendicular, or their foundation not strong, they could do nothing to remedy it, but to take down their work and do it over again. So it is with you. Every habit you form is one stone laid in your character. At this early age you may correct bad habits, but it will be all but impossible when you shall have become a man. Besides, the character of a youth is fixed, as to great matters, much sooner than many suppose. Not long ago, I came to a place in which I had spent many of my youthful days, and saw several of my playmates. They are now men and women, and some of them have children as old as I was when we all went to school together. Other changes have taken place, but in

almost every one I see the same general character.

Let me give you an instance. There is John Smith, who was the most diligent boy in the school. He is still diligent, and has gained so much knowledge that he is thought to be the wisest lawyer in the State. There is Samuel Johnson, who was idle, sleepy, careless, fond of his bed, and fond of eating. He is still the same sluggish creature ; he still rises several hours after the sun ; he eats, and drinks, and slumbers. His little property is gone ; his coat is out at the elbows ; he has lately been released from imprisonment, and will be *Lazy Sam* (I fear) as long as he lives.

Religion, I know, works great and happy changes in some, even late in life. But what I desire for you is, that religion may work this change early in life ; or rather that the grace

of God may so mould your character *now*, that in these particulars there may be no need of a change so radical. For it is better to lay the foundation right at the beginning, than to tear down the whole walls to put right what is found to be wrong. That is, it is better for a boy to form right habits, from the fear of God, in his boyhood, than to live in wrong habits twenty years, and then try to change them when it is too late. I know some pious persons who are mourning every day over the bad habits of their childhood. Thus they know it is a sin to be slothful, yet they find it too late to acquire diligence, and they lounge all day over newspapers, or trifling conversation, when they might be doing something to benefit their own souls or those of their neighbours.

The proverb of the ancients is good, *Do what is right, however un-*

pleasant, and custom will make it delightful. You know a little boy, who lives near you, who makes it a rule to walk four miles before breakfast every morning. When he began this it was very irksome, and he was often tempted to give it up; but his father told him that “custom would make it delightful,” and he persevered. This became true; he would not now miss his morning walk on any account. I have no doubt he will retain the habit through life, and it will probably keep him a robust, healthy man for many years. Those little things which seem hard to you, in your studies, are of the same kind. Do not give way, like a coward, to every difficulty. It is like diving into the river, which you used to do with me; the first dash only is disagreeable. Make it a rule to conquer difficulties. In

this respect be a man at once. In your Latin, your arithmetic, or your exercises, *be brave*. Form a habit of not leaving any thing *half-done*. In the long run it is the easiest way to master every thing before you leave it. Some boys, for instance, never learn the Greek verb perfectly. This they might do in a few days. But they prefer skimming over the lesson, and leave the master to help them out. Now, just look at what follows; every day, as long as they learn Greek, they feel their need of this knowledge. Every day they are mortified, if not disgraced or punished. Yet the *habit of negligence* sticks by them. It creeps into other things. For the very same reasons, they are negligent in composition, in mathematics, and in oratory. They fix the habit for life, and for life are negligent fellows.

Remember, my dear brother, that it is not what you actually learn that is solely important. By learning this or that, you not only treasure up such and such things in your memory, but you discipline your mind. That is, you form *habits* of mind. When a person's mind is tutored into good habits, he is said to have a disciplined mind. One may learn a great many things, and yet have an undisciplined mind, because he learned them carelessly, hastily, or in the wrong order. Just as the poor beggar, who used to come to our door, knew more poetry than all of us put together, while he was so far from being wise that he could not put two ideas together in the way of reasoning. You are young, and cannot choose for yourself what is best. But your teachers select those studies which will tend

to give your mind proper habits. Pay all possible attention to these studies. Be perfect in them. Every *hour now* is worth more to you than a *day* is to me. Every day is confirming you in some habit, either good or bad. And if you are not careful to aim at those which are good, you will most assuredly fall into such as are bad. You cannot be too much in earnest then ; attend to every thing which your teacher advises. Several things are apt to be neglected by boys which they find very important when they come to be men. Your time of rising, your attention to personal neatness, your punctuality at school, your bodily exercise, your pronunciation and manners, your temperance and self-denial, your accuracy in study, all these things are contributing to make you (if your life should be

spared) a useful, agreeable, wise, and happy man, or a disgusting, ignorant, and discontented booby.

Your affectionate brother,
JAMES.



CHAPTER XII.

DANGER OF EVIL COMPANY.

My dear brother,—From your earliest infancy you have been taught to avoid bad company, and I hope you see the importance of this more and more. Our manners, our habits, and our ways of thinking are gathered very much from the persons with whom we associate. If you are pleased with the society of idle, irreligious, or profane boys, it is a sure sign that you are already corrupted. And the longer you con-

tinue in their company the more you will be injured.

In every school there are some lads who are seducers and corrupters of the rest. They are not always rude or insolent, nor so openly wicked as to shock you at the first acquaintance. Often they are young persons of good manners and gentle behaviour; but under this cloak, they are false, malignant, or licentious. When you first become acquainted with them, you are charmed by their pleasant deportment; and it is not for a good while that you find out their real character.

There is a saying of a Latin poet which is very true, "No one ever became profligate all at once." The first steps are very slight. The progress is almost imperceptible. When a boy who has been piously educated first comes among ungodly com

panions, he is shocked with their wickedness. He trembles when he hears them profane the name of God, and retreats from their presence. Their immodest conversation causes him to blush. When they tell wilful falsehoods, he is frightened at their daring. After having been some time in their company, this alarm and horror give way. He still dislikes their wicked words and actions, but his ear becomes familiar to the unholy sounds, and he grows used to their impieties. Perhaps a boyish curiosity leads him to mingle in their circle, and listen to their tales. By degrees he is indifferent to what at first so much startled him. *Evil communications corrupt good manners*, and he grows more and more like his company. Unless restrained by divine grace, he becomes worse every day. Beginning with foolish exclamations

and minced oaths, he at length desires to appear manly and spirited, and ventures upon some profane expression. At his first oath, it is likely he turns pale or feels an inward shuddering. But by degrees this goes off. He is shamed out of his early principles, and tries to let his companions see that he is as fearless as themselves. So he proceeds, (if not arrested,) until he becomes a complete profligate.

Alas! this is the course of many a young man over whom the tears of piety have been shed. Many a youth has thus gone on, till he has broken a tender mother's heart, and brought down her "gray hairs with sorrow to the grave." Evil company is one of the chief things which corrupt youth. Without bad companions, they would not learn to swear, to curse, or to use indelicate language; without bad companions, they would

not be tempted to taste intoxicating drinks, to play at games of hazard, or to practise dishonesty. It is likely that Satan tempts quite as much by wicked persons (who are his tools) as he does directly by his own suggestions to our hearts.

As no one can touch pitch without being defiled, so no young person can be much with wicked playmates without being corrupted. Do not be deceived about this. We all think a great deal of our own resolution, and perhaps you will flatter yourself that you are not to be influenced by bad companions. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." The only safety is in flight. You cannot sincerely pray, "Lead us not into temptation," if you rush into bad company, which is one of the very worst of all temptations. It may be the duty of some persons to go among the wicked, to

do them good ; just as it may be the duty of some persons to go into a fire, to put it out. But it would be the height of presumptuous folly to walk through the raging flames without necessity ; and it is just as presumptuous and as foolish to frequent the society of the wicked.

One of the principal disadvantages of irreligious company is, that it prevents or destroys serious impressions on the heart. As soon as wicked youth perceive that one of their number is thinking about religion, they all turn upon him in ridicule. And in too many cases they are successful. The poor deluded coward is more afraid of their scorn than of the wrath of God. He is ashamed to let it be known that he prays or reads the Bible. Thousands and thousands have thus been drawn away from the door of life by the taunts of scoffers. Now, my dear

brother, as you value your immortal soul, beware of this. Never be ashamed of Christ. And to avoid this temptation, avoid all wicked companions. Consider carefully who are your intimates. If there is among them a single boy who is idle, profane, lewd, deceitful, false, or quarrelsome, *shun that boy*. Break off all acquaintance with him at once. Have as little to say to him and to do with him as possible. You need not offend him, but you must assuredly avoid him. The psalmist describes the good man as one who “walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.” Solomon says, “My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not: my son, walk not thou in the way with them, refrain thy foot from their path.” Read also the following passages: “Enter not into

the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men; *avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.*" "Forsake the foolish, and live, and go in the way of understanding." "He that walketh with the wise shall be wise; but a companion of fools shall be destroyed."

By acting in the way which I recommend, it is possible that you may displease some of your school-mates; but it is better to displease them than to offend God. And in the end, it is very likely that even they will see that your way of life is better than theirs. Remember, that the path of youth is beset with dangers, and ask help of God, and instruction from his word. "How shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word." Farewell.

Your affectionate brother,

JAMES

LETTER XIII.

FRIENDSHIPS.

My dear brother,—Tell me your company, says a proverb, and I will tell you what you are. This is a text on which I have several times enlarged, in my previous letters. It is a sentiment which you should constantly remember, for it will make your friendships safe and delightful, and will also preserve you from many of the misfortunes into which unwary youth are prone to fall.

But after you have made choice of your acquaintances, after you have discouraged the familiarities of wicked youth, and formed a little circle of proper companions, it is right that you should pay special attention to another point of duty. It is the regulation of your conduct

towards those with whom you are intimate. In this particular, boys are always unguarded; every one is liable to err on one side or the other. I hope, therefore, that a few brief directions may not be thrown away upon you.

Be cautious and slow in choosing your friends. This is what you have already learned, and it is merely introductory to the rules and counsels which follow.

When you have acquired a good friend, be firm and constant in your attachment. It is very disgraceful to abandon a friend without cause. None are so ready to sin in this way as those rash youth who are too hasty in becoming intimate with every new acquaintance. The natural consequence is, that after a few days or weeks, they begin to perceive faults which they had not previously allowed themselves time

to discern. They then become disgusted, grow cool in their affection, and are forced to look around them for some new associate. Such was the manner of *Julius*. Whenever a new scholar arrived, Julius was the first to take him by the hand. And this was not a mere pretence, for he felt the friendship he professed. But he did not take time to study the character of his playmates, and therefore it was only two or three days before he found out some foible in the new-comer, and cast him off as speedily as he had at first embraced him. Then he attached himself to another, and another; and so he went on, until he had, at some time or other, been familiar with the whole school, and had abandoned them all in turn. Julius changed his friends almost as often as his clothes. Such a young man is incapable of true friendship; and his

reigning fault is soon discovered by every one. Julius is despised as a fickle and inconstant fellow.

Beware of trusting too much to the professions of your companions. I would not have you surly, morose, or suspicious; but all is not gold that glitters. The human heart is deceitful, and those who really love you to-day may be altered to-morrow. When you have tried a friend, and found him faithful, you may safely confide to him even your private thoughts; but take care that you are not deceived. Especially avoid the practice of telling secrets, particularly the secrets of other people, to your young acquaintances. It is a general rule, which it will be safe for you to observe, never to confide a secret to any one, unless you want either advice or assistance. For, if you cannot keep your own counsel, how can you expect others to keep it for

you? Whenever, therefore, you meet with a person who is frequently taking you aside, to whisper something into your ear, "*in confidence*," you may be sure he is an unsafe companion. Tell no secrets of your own to such a one; and listen to as few of his as possible.

Cherish a warm attachment to your friends when they are in any trouble.

"A friend in need is a friend indeed."

And Solomon says: "He that is a friend must show himself friendly."

To forsake a companion in the time when he most needs your assistance is base, it is inhuman. The very heathen may teach us a good lesson on this subject. "The name of friendship," says Ovid, "touches the hearts of the very barbarians." Cicero wrote a whole book on the subject of friendship, and it is full of excellent sentiments. You have perhaps read the beautiful anecdote of *Damon*

and Pythias; it is related by Valerius Maximus. Damon was condemned to death by Dionysius the tyrant. He obtained leave, however, to go home and settle his affairs, promising to return to the place of execution at a certain hour. And his friend Pythias surrendered himself to the tyrant, and agreed that if Damon was not there at the time, he would himself suffer the punishment in his place. Dionysius naturally concluded that Pythias was a fool, and that Damon would be glad of such an opportunity to escape. But, behold! when the hour arrived, to the astonishment of all, Damon appeared punctually at the place, and declared that he was ready to die. The cruel king was touched by this ardent friendship; he forgave the offender, and begged that he might be numbered among their friends.

This reminds me also of a severe

raying of the cynic Diogenes. When he was asked how Dionysius treated his friends, he replied, "Just as one treats earthen vessels; when they are full, he empties them; when they are empty, he throws them aside."

Be forbearing towards the faults of a friend. True, you must not love or copy his faults; indeed, it is an important part of friendship to reprove and correct them. But do not abandon an acquaintance for a few faults, or even for a great one, if he has been truly faithful, and if you are not endangered by his example.

Cherish a mild and benevolent temper in all your intercourse. An irritable young man can scarcely be a good companion; and the ill-humour is contagious. The wisest of kings teaches us this lesson: "Make no

friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go; lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul." Prov. xxii. 24.

Never do a wrong thing for the sake of friendship. If you seriously observe this rule, it will keep you from a thousand mischiefs. When *Pericles* was asked by an intimate acquaintance to bear false witness for him, that great man answered, "I am your friend only to the altars," meaning, that he would go as far to help him as religion would allow.

Try to make salutary impressions on the minds of your friends. Many thousands have been converted by means of friendly admonition. If our acquaintances were sick, we would try to heal them; how much more should we try to save their souls! A single word of affectionate advice

sometimes does more good than many sermons. And when a youth professes to serve God, he ought to be neither ashamed nor afraid to open his lips in behalf of his Master's cause.

I trust these few directions (which I might multiply a hundred-fold) will be carefully read by you, and faithfully put in practice.

Your affectionate brother,

JAMES

LETTER XIV.

GOOD EXAMPLE.

My dear brother,—When I wrote to you about the dangers of evil company, I did not wish you to suppose that you must avoid all society. This would be very wrong, and would make you mopish and sullen. I desire you to frequent the company of all such young friends as can do you good; and I hope there are some whose example you would do well to follow. When you find such a one, who is diligent, kind, respectful, and serious, you will act wisely to be as much as possible with him, and to follow in his steps.

It is very true, as is often said, that *example speaks louder than words*. We often think that certain things are impossible until we see them

done by others, and then we begin to attempt them ourselves. There is something in our nature which leads us to imitate the example of those around us. It is thus that all the boys in a school will have the same sports and pastimes; one learns from another, until they all go in the same path. Now you should take care to follow none but good examples; and here you will have to be very cautious, for our evil hearts lead us more naturally to what is evil than to what is virtuous. There is nothing mean or low in copying the good example of your friends. It is in this way that some of the best and greatest men have become what they are.

I would recommend to you to read the lives of persons who have been remarkable for their knowledge or their goodness. When these memoirs are well written, it is almost

as if we were acquainted with the living persons, seeing them act and hearing them speak. There is no kind of reading which is more entertaining than biography, and there is none which is more instructive. In this way you may be constantly setting before your mind the brightest examples, and this will stir you up to be more active in trying to improve. I have never found any books which made me more anxious to excel, than good biographical sketches. When you read of a person who has raised himself from ignorance and obscurity to learning and honour, by his own endeavours, a laudable emulation will lead you to imitate his excellence. Thus the Life of Dr. Franklin has caused many a young mechanic to store his mind with knowledge.

But the best of all biographies are those which are contained in the

Holy Scriptures. Have you ever taken notice how much of the Bible is filled with the memoirs of good men? The reason of this no doubt is, that example is so much more powerful than precept. The four gospels contain the memoirs of our Lord Jesus Christ. And they are so beautifully simple, so exact, and so touching, that we seem to see the blessed Redeemer, holy and benevolent, going about doing good, healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, raising the dead. We seem to hear him speaking as never man spake, and the influence of his example is most powerful upon the mind of the serious reader. My dear brother, read these lovely histories every day. Try to frame in your mind all the circumstances of the scenes there described. Endeavour to feel that it is Christ himself who is speaking to you, and let his words sink into

your heart. Find out how he acted under all different circumstances, and then copy his example. How did he treat his parents? (Luke ii. 48 and 51.) How did he feel towards the afflicted? How did he act when he was reviled and persecuted? What was his manner as to prayer and devotion? Every hour of the day be careful to ask yourself how the Lord Jesus would have acted under similar circumstances.

It is an advantage for young people to keep company with those who are older and wiser; but there are few youth who have any taste for this kind of society. They are too apt to think that elderly persons are sour and gloomy. And sometimes, it cannot be denied that those who are advanced in years do not take pains to gratify the inquiries of the young, and to do them good. When, however, you find any aged man who

loves to give instruction to the young, and whose example is beautiful and pure, try to be as much with him as possible. I have known such a one. *Benevolus* is a man of threescore years. His hair is white with age, and he is too feeble to leave the house. But he is happy, because he has faith in Christ, and enjoys the love of God shed abroad in his heart. There is nothing peevish or morose about him, and he welcomes the visits of all his young relations and friends. He delights in teaching them what is good, and in giving them the history of his early days. And all who come into his presence see the excellence of true religion, and the advantage of having a mind stored with useful knowledge.

I have said so much about *following* good example, that it will be less needful for me to explain the importance of your *setting* a good example

to others. No one of us is allowed to live for himself alone, but we must all endeavour to do good to others. We are commanded to let our light shine before men. You must not suppose that, because you are so young, nobody will follow your example. If you do what is wrong, others of your companions will be encouraged to do the same; and if you do what is right, you may be a blessing to all around you. One boy in a school will often be of service to all the rest, just in this way. I will give you an instance of such a case, and take notice that I sometimes invent names, because I have reasons for not mentioning the individuals.

Tyro was a young lad of about fourteen. He was sent to a school where most of the boys were very idle. They cared but little about the improvement of their minds, and

were constantly engaged in sports and mischief. Tyro tried to set them a better example. He got every lesson perfectly, and he assisted others in their tasks. He made it his amusement to read more than was assigned for his lesson, and he induced some of the idle fellows to become diligent. He put them in the way of attempting new studies, and of writing compositions. He persuaded them to form a little society for mutual improvement, and had many little plans of this kind, for their benefit. The consequence was, that I never saw a school of the same extent, in which there were so many fine scholars. And I am sure that Tyro was more influential in this than even the teacher himself. Think of this example.

You cannot go through life without having some influence upon others. This influence is either for good or

for evil. You may be either a blessing or a curse. Pray and strive that your example may do good to all around you. Endeavour to lead others in the right way, especially the way of religion. You cannot begin this too soon, and in future life, it will be very pleasing for you to look back and see that you had early begun to be useful to your fellow creatures. Ask assistance from above, that you may be enabled to live in this way. And remember that many eyes are fixed upon you, to see how you will act, and that the happiness of your friends, and especially of your affectionate parents, depends greatly upon your conduct.

Your affectionate brother,

JAMES.

LETTER XV.

TRUTH AND FALSEHOOD.

My dear brother,—Few names are considered more disgraceful than that of a *liar*. This is justly so; for the vice is odious, injurious to society, and offensive to God. Truth is the chief bond between man and man in society. If every one spoke without regard to truth, our reputation, property, and lives would be in jeopardy every moment. We should never know when to believe a neighbour; or by believing falsehood, we might be led into the greatest danger.

You will commonly take notice that boys who lie, very soon show that they are ready for other vices. He who can so violate his conscience as to tell a wilful lie, will soon find

it equally easy to violate his conscience by cursing, swearing, or stealing. Indeed, lying and stealing are nearly related. Lying is dishonesty in words; theft is dishonesty in deeds. I know a young man at school who was noted for his disregard of truth. He became a physician, and very soon after was convicted of a very atrocious act of dishonesty. Another was for a long time suspected of no crime but falsehood; it was not long, however, before he was caught stealing the wearing apparel of his friends. Both these were young men of liberal education.

The great reason why we should maintain the truth is, that God requires it of us. "Putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour; for we are members one of another." Eph. iv. 25. Falsehood is hateful to God. We seem

to offer him a direct insult whenever we speak what is untrue, because he is always present, and nothing can escape his omniscience.

Whenever we wilfully deceive, we are guilty of falsehood, whatever be the words uttered. Indeed, we may lie without uttering any words at all—by mere signs. We may deceive by being altogether silent; and this is wrong in all cases where others have a right to any information from us. From this you will perceive that all equivocations, or expressions with two meanings, are falsehoods, when the person hearing them understands them so as to be deceived by them. I would earnestly recommend to you to avoid even the very appearance of evil in this thing, and never, even in jest, to sport with truth. It is so awful a thing to offend God by a lie, that it is the part of wisdom never to speak

what is untrue, even for the purposes of amusement.

I am afraid that young persons at our public schools are too little impressed with the importance of this subject. It is often thought quite a feat when a boy, by a clever falsehood, can escape punishment for a fault; and thus by treating a great sin in a very trifling matter, the conscience becomes seared as with a hot iron. It is alarming to see how readily children learn to depart from the truth, and how hard it is to eradicate the habit. I know people whom I consider pious, but who have never entirely overcome the propensity to stretch their expressions beyond the actual fact. This is what is called *exaggeration* or *hyperbole*, both which words mean about the same; that is, heaping up expressions beyond the simple matter described, or letting our language

shoot over the plain truth. Avoid this. It is here, if anywhere, that you are in danger. I cannot believe that you would tell a wilful falsehood; but most young persons are apt to exaggerate. Thus, if a servant neglects your horse two or three times, you will perhaps say in anger, "Thomas has forgotten to feed my horse *every day*:" or, "he never thinks of feeding my horse." Thus, also, in describing a thunder-storm, some persons always describe it as the loudest and most alarming they ever heard in their lives. This sort of exaggeration is most common among those who have been accustomed to the use of hyperbolical or extravagant phrases in common discourse. Thus some persons cannot speak of a hearty laugh without saying, "He almost killed himself with laughing." Every warm day is the hottest they ever felt; and every

ungainly man, the ugliest man they ever saw. Beware of all such unmeaning exaggerations, for you may be assured they lead to the evil habit against which I am warning you.

It is commonly said, and with truth, that great talkers are apt to exaggerate. I hope you will never become noted as a great talker; although I have met with persons who seemed to take a vulgar pride in their very loquacity. "In the multitude of words, there lacketh not sin," and you will be upon the safe side by repressing your desire to talk. Very loquacious persons commonly talk much nonsense, and, in order to excite attention, sometimes set their invention to work, and give a high colour to all they describe. Let me enjoin it upon you, to fix in your mind a sacred reverence for truth; and whenever you describe any incident, take care to describe it

precisely as it occurred. Even let your description be flat or cold, rather than run the risk of exaggeration.

Let your soul be impressed with the awful majesty of God, as being the witness of every word you utter, and you will lose all temptation to violate the truth.

Your affectionate brother,

JAMES.

LETTER XVI.

INDEPENDENCE.

My dear brother,—The ancients made *fortitude* one of the four cardinal virtues; meaning by this term, not merely the power of enduring pain, but every thing that we now call courage; and they used to say, with truth, that where there was no fortitude, the other virtues were left defenceless. I have often thought that half the bad actions of boys arise from a sort of cowardice, a want of manly independence. Peter will not wear his new hat for several days after he gets it, for fear James will laugh at him. And James, though he knows it is wrong to play truant, does so, lest Charles should think him a coward. In our old-time schools, when we used to “bar

out" the master, it was this false shame or want of moral courage which kept most of the lads from surrendering, even after they had found out that they were in the wrong.

Make it a rule for life to do what you know to be right, no matter what others think or say. Do your duty, and leave the consequences to God. Some people lose their souls from neglect of this. They know very well that they ought to pray, and read the Scriptures, and attend on other means of grace, and own Christ by a public profession; but they are afraid of the scoffs of the world—they hesitate—they procrastinate—they are lost.

Remember, my dear boy, that you are now forming your character for life. When you trained the woodbine around the columns of our piazza, its stock was very slender.

You could bend it with your finger and thumb. I looked at it yesterday; it is as thick as my wrist, and perfectly hard and immovable. You might break it, but you could not possibly alter its twists. The woodbine has a habit of being twisted. This habit was formed when it was tender and supple. If it had been trained between long iron bars, I suppose it might have got a habit of being straight. But it is now too late to straighten it. Now, is it not possible that my dear brother is growing crooked? You take my meaning. Is it not possible that you are getting habits which are wrong? My heart's wish is for you to grow up in such a way as to be erect, upright, noble, in all your principles. If you are always reckoning what John, or Maria, or this man, or those girls, or the world at large will think of you, it is certain you can

never have any manly firmness. I wish you to begin from the hour you read this, to do what is right in every particular, in spite of what ignorant or wicked youth may say. There is Lewis Lee, your Philadelphia acquaintance. He is altogether a slave to other people's notions. I remember that last summer he refused to attend his mother to the steamboat, because he had found out that some young gentlemen in Chestnut street had made free with the cut of his coat. Lewis is not afraid of telling an untruth; but he cannot bear to be the object of ridicule. Again I say, *be independent*. Try to get right opinions, and to do right acts; and bid defiance to idle remark. But be not hasty in forming opinions; be not obstinate in retaining them. Take the advice of the wise and the good, and use every means to learn

the best path. Only stick to it when you are sure that you are in it.

Want of this firmness ruins thousands of young men every year. In our colleges, most of the disturbances and rebellions which take place are from this source. A few youth, who are perhaps already in disgrace, inveigle a number of others into their plots; and the latter, like silly sheep, follow wherever the ringleaders go. Why? O, because it would expose them to contempt or insult to go back, or return to honourable obedience. They put on a bold face, but they are chicken-hearted in reality. Not one of them can stand alone, or think for himself. These are the lads who grow up to be "men of honour," (that is the name they have,) duellists, fashionable murderers. O beware of such yielding weakness! *Fear God*, my child-

ren, said a great Frenchman, *have no other fear.*

Your affectionate brother,
JAMES.

LETTER XVII.

FALSE SHAME.

My dear brother,—Long ago I read in one of Miss Edgeworth's tales a maxim which has remained in my memory ever since. It was to this effect: *No one will ever become great who is afraid of being laughed at.* Now I do not wish you to seek after the empty and false greatness of this world. Ambition of this kind is contrary to the mind of Christ. But I desire you to have true greatness, virtuous independence, frankness, generosity, firmness, and decision of character.

It is not necessary for me to spend time in proving to you that the evil of which I speak is very common. Look around among your acquaintances, and you will see many who are more afraid of ridicule than they are of pain. I knew a remarkable instance of this fault. *Lucius* was a playmate of mine at school, and a very intimate friend. He was a lad of genius, and of many good qualities, but the fear of ridicule was ruinous to him. It spoiled almost all his fine traits. There was nothing so terrible to him as a *laugh*. At any time he would have chosen a whipping rather than a sneer from his schoolmates. He therefore was led to do many wrong things, and kept from doing many right things, by his *false shame*. *Lucius* did not stop to ask whether any particular thing was right or wrong in the sight of God ;

he first question in his mind was,
What will people think of it?

The effect of this mental disease was soon manifested, and it showed itself in some ways which were really ridiculous. For example, Lucius became so fully possessed of the idea that every-body was looking at him, and criticising him, that whenever he walked the streets his whole air was affected by it. If he got a new coat, or hat, he was in misery, lest they should draw attention. On a certain occasion, I have even known him to walk through a puddle of water in order to conceal the gloss of a new pair of boots. The same foolish pride made him refuse the most useful articles of dress, if they were a little uncommon. He seemed to imagine that he was an object of universal attention, and was a mere slave to the opinions of others.

Lucius was soon rendered very

unhappy; for it was not long before the boys discovered his reigning foible. They took pleasure in laughing at his dress, his features, his tones, his walk, and almost every thing which he said or did. Poor Lucius could not keep his countenance under their raillery; and sometimes his eyes would fill with tears of mortification. This temper grew up with him, and the consequence is, that he is a poor, feeble, undecided, wavering fellow, who is afraid to take his course with a manly firmness, and must learn the opinion of every one around him, before he ventures upon any proceeding.

This ridiculous pride, or false shame, is something more than a mere laughable peculiarity. It produces real misery, both to the subject of it and to others. Thus many persons are kept from seeking the favour of God by fear of being ridi-

culed. In like manner, many neglect the duty of professing Christ before men, for the same cause. One young man is ashamed to become a Sunday-school teacher; people will take notice of it, and he will be laughed at! Another young man is afraid to own that he has religious feelings, or to say a word to his ungodly companions, lest they should scoff at him. Thus God is dishonoured, and souls are lost.

Read the histories of great men, and you will see how different were *their* feelings. If *Howard* had regarded those who used to call him "Mad Jack Howard," we never should have heard of his benevolent deeds. Or to go further back, if *Columbus* had been afraid of ridicule, America might not have been discovered.

Cultivate the habit of doing what is right, come what will. Be firm,

be manly; have right opinions, and hold them fast. The dread of idle laughter is the meanest sort of cowardice. Begin at once to overcome it. Especially in matters of duty and religion, beware how you suffer the fear of man to ensnare you. I have known young men who would rather be detected in lying or swearing, than let it be known that they had retired for private devotion. And I have seen boys who would shut their Bible in the twinkling of an eye, and pretend to be doing something else, if any one came into the room where they were reading. How mean, how foolish, how wicked, is such a temper! Scorn to be guilty of this baseness of mind. A proper regard for the opinion of others is surely desirable; but as a rational, an accountable, an immortal being, do not suffer yourself to be in servitude to other minds: above all, do

not submit to the paltry laughter of those who are perhaps far inferior in judgment to yourself.

I repeat it, then, begin *at once* to conquer this failing, if you are conscious of it in any degree. Do what you believe to be right, in all cases; do it at once, and at all risks. Suppose idle, foolish, or wicked persons laugh at you. What then? Does their laughter injure you? Or will their good opinion repay you for the loss of a good conscience? Is not the praise of God better than the praise of man? You may depend upon it as an undoubted truth, that the very way to avoid mortification is, to despise ignorant ridicule; and the very way to be constantly on the rack of confusion and injured vanity is, to yield to the scoffings of the unwise. And in the things of religion, to be governed by fear of shame is not only foolish, but *impious*. It is no-

thing less than preferring man to God! Remember the words of Christ: "*Whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.*" Luke ix. 26. Farewell.

Your affectionate brother,
JAMES.

LETTER XVIII.

EVIL SPEAKING.

My dear brother,—The sins of the tongue are, perhaps, more numerous than all our other outward offences. And faults of this kind are very common in young persons. It is not usual to find a youth who is not fond of talking, and where there is much talking, as I have said to you before, there is commonly much sin. Very few boys or girls feel the importance of keeping a strict watch over their lips : and hence, much of their time is taken up in idle, unprofitable, and wicked conversation.

I hope I need not say a word more to you about wilful lying, profaneness, or slander. These you have been taught to abhor. But there are vices, allied to these, and

partaking of their character, into which young persons are very apt to fall. Their wickedness is not so open and glaring, and therefore they are committed without compunction.

When young people are talking together, in high spirits, nothing is more natural than for them to converse about their neighbours and acquaintances ; and they are as likely to speak of the faults, as the excellencies of these persons. In this way, the habit is formed of remarking too freely on personal character, and thus many, before they suspect themselves, fall into the vice of slander. Even when you know of an offence committed by another, it is right to say nothing of it, except where silence would plainly be a sin. "He that covereth a transgression seeketh love." Prov. xvii. 9. Charity, or true Christian love rejoiceth

not in iniquity—believeth all things—hopeth all things.

In general, the less you talk about absent persons the better. Especially, the less you speak of their faults, the better. Some boys are in a hurry to repeat every thing they hear about the misdeeds of their acquaintances. This shows a low and depraved temper. We may slander, even by speaking the truth; and if we loved our neighbour as ourselves, we should conceal his frailties, just as we always try to conceal our own. The character of a slanderer is justly abhorred. Try to avoid even the appearance of being such. The Scriptures describe the good man as one “that backbiteth not with his tongue.” Ps. xv. 3. And they class together “backbiters, and haters of God.” Rom. i. 30. In order to keep clear of this vice, beware of *tale-bearing*.

There are some things, indeed, which your duty as a son or a pupil will constrain you to make known; and this ought not to be called tale-bearing, but faithfulness.

What I mean to guard you against is, the disposition to tattle about every fault or misdemeanour of your playmates or friends. So far as it is practicable or lawful, be the last to carry the bad tidings of a transgression. Be careful not to say any thing about others, which you would not be willing they should hear, or which you would not be willing they shall say of you.

Harsh and reviling language used towards others is a kind of slander. It injures the feelings and the character of those to whom it is addressed. And it is, perhaps, more common among boys than among men; for as persons grow up to years of maturity, they learn the imprudence

and the danger of abusing their neighbours with violent words. "Revilers," we are told, "shall not inherit the kingdom of God." 1 Cor. vi. 10.

A very common sort of indirect slander is the ridicule often bestowed by the young upon the foibles of their acquaintance. You often hear boys laughing at the peculiarities of some unfortunate youth, and amusing themselves with his looks, his walk, his pronunciation, or his dress. Where there is a talent for mimicry, this disposition is still more encouraged. Young persons are fond of "taking off" every thing ridiculous in their playmates. Very few persons seem to regard this as wrong; but a little consideration will convince you that it is so; for we always think less of any one who is thus held up in a ludicrous point of view; and this is the very effect produced

by slander. The offence becomes a crime when the ridicule is aimed at the natural defects or misfortunes of others. None but the most hard-hearted will sport with the infirmities of the aged, the blind, the crippled, or the poor. And I would advise you to shun the company of any boy who is in the habit of laughing at, or mimicking the natural and unavoidable peculiarities of those around him.

Take care, my dear brother, how you censure the faults of any. Perhaps you are guilty of the very same. Or, if not, perhaps the report you have heard is untrue. Or, even if it is true, there may be palliating circumstances of which you are ignorant. Or, even at the worst, if it should be all that you might imagine, it can do no good to remark upon it, and you may be inflicting an injury which you can never repair. There

s scarcely any thing so dear to man as reputation ; and when this is once stained by calumny, it is exceedingly hard, and often impossible, to remove the spot.

You are now forming habits for life. I pray you, avoid this habit of evil-speaking. It is one of the most common sins of mankind, and therefore I am the more earnest that you should escape it. Do not even listen to slander. Let all around you know, that it gives you no pleasure to hear your fellow creatures traduced.

Last of all ; the surest method of avoiding habits of evil-speaking, is to maintain sincere love for all your fellow-creatures. We never willingly injure those we sincerely love. We never speak bitterly and slanderously of our own dear relations. And so far as we have true charity

for all mankind, we shall avoid the very appearance of calumny.

Your affectionate brother,
JAMES.

LETTER XIX.

BENEVOLENCE.

My dear brother,—If I were to send you ten dollars to spend as you choose, after you had purchased such things as you need, what would you do with the remainder? I am sure you would take much more pleasure in giving it to some poor, starving family, than in laying it out upon toys and eatables. The satisfaction would last much longer. When the miserable sufferers thanked you, it would give you delight; your own conscience would tell you that you

had done right; and whenever you thought of it afterwards, it would be with pleasure. But besides all this, there is satisfaction in the very act of doing good. There is something delightful in the very feeling of love.

I wish you to think a little about this. The feeling of which I have just written is called *benevolence*, or good-will. It is the disposition to do good—to make others happy. It is what the Bible calls *charity*. And it always gives pleasure, for we cannot love any one sincerely without feeling a degree of happiness for the moment. Just think of the times when you have felt most affectionate towards your dear parents. Was it not a delightful feeling? And when a kind mother presses her infant to her bosom, does she not enjoy more than if some one did a favour to herself? It is always so. And, therefore, the more benevolent you are,

the more happiness you will have. If you wish to be peaceful in your mind, do as much good as you can.

This is a great part of true religion. *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.* And wherever this love or benevolence is in any one's heart, it will make him *do good*. He will try to be useful, and to make every one happy around him. Religion begins in the heart, but it does not end there. It leads persons to act. People may talk about religion, and tell how many good feelings they have; but if they never *do good*, if they are not active, there is reason to fear that they have no religion at all. And therefore the Scripture always makes this a mark of true piety. The apostle James says, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this: *to visit the fatherless and the widows in their affliction*, and to keep himself un-

spotted from the world.” Is it not a contradiction to speak of a pious man who does no good? You see at once that it is. An idle Christian is no true Christian. We are all sent into the world to honour God, and we do this whenever we perform what is good.

Young persons ought to begin as soon as possible to put this in practice. There is such a thing as learning to do good, and forming a habit of doing good; and we cannot begin too soon. Perhaps you will say that you do not know where to begin. I will tell you. Begin with the very next person you meet; with those who are around you now; with your relatives and your companions. Try to make every one happy to the utmost of your power. Avoid every thing, in your actions, your words, and your very looks, which could give unnecessary pain. Keep this

up at all times. Thus you will constantly be cherishing a benevolent temper. If you are kind and affectionate in small matters, I am sure you will be so in those which are more important. There is an old saying about money matters which you may have heard: *Take care of the pence, and the pounds will take care of themselves.* The meaning of this is, that people lose more by neglecting small sums of money, than by losing larger ones. Almost any man will take care of a hundred dollar note. He will carry it in his pocket-book for months, without losing it. But during the same time, he will perhaps squander away as much by little and little. If he had taken good care of these small sums, he might have saved a good deal. So it is with respect to benevolence. Almost any man will be benevolent when there is any dreadful suffering

which he can relieve, or any great act of charity which he can do. But perhaps this very same man will all the time be unkind and pettish to his family, and will make every one near him feel unpleasantly. But if you begin with these little things, which are occurring every day and every hour, you will preserve a benevolent disposition the whole time, and will be more ready to do some greater act of charity when it is called for.

There have been some men so benevolent, that they have spent almost all their lives in trying to relieve the distressed. One of the most remarkable of these was *Howard*, who for this reason is usually called the *philanthropist*, that is, the "lover of mankind." JOHN HOWARD was born at Clayton, in England, in the year 1727. His father left him a large estate, but his health was so

infirm, during his youth, that he did not engage in much active business. He was a man of a kind and tender heart, and was always seeking to do good. When the dreadful earthquake took place which overwhelmed the city of Lisbon, he was so touched with pity that he undertook a voyage to Portugal, in 1755, to see if he could give any relief to the inhabitants. But he was taken by a French ship, and carried into Brest, where he remained some months as a prisoner. Here he began to learn how many distresses were suffered by those who are confined in jails, and his benevolent spirit longed to relieve them. When he returned to England, he made many inquiries on this subject, and began to examine all the prisons in England, in order to reform them. He wrote books about this, and procured new laws to be passed by the parliament.

But Howard was not contented with lessening the sufferings of prisoners in England. He knew that their case was worse in other countries, and he determined to visit the continent of Europe. In this work he spent twelve years. Between 1775 and 1787 he went four times to Germany, five times to Holland, twice to Italy, besides visiting Spain, Portugal, Turkey, and the north of Europe. He often travelled night and day, visiting all the principal hospitals and prisons. He did not regard expense or danger, for his whole soul was taken up with the desire to do good. At Valladolid, in Spain, he became a prisoner himself, for a month, in order to know the real truth. And when he returned home, he published a large work, in which he gave an account of what he had seen. And in this.

way he did more than was ever done before, to render the condition of prisoners less miserable.

But his benevolent heart was not satisfied with this. The plague was raging in many parts of Europe. This dreadful complaint is worse than the yellow fever, and often destroyed thousands in a few weeks. Howard resolved to learn all about it, and find out how it might be cured. He had studied medicine in his youth, and he travelled, as a physician, through various countries. In 1785 he went to Marseilles. Then he visited the hospitals in Italy and Turkey, exposing himself to the greatest dangers. Whenever it was possible, he gave relief. In 1789 he published another work, giving an account of the plague. The same year he set out upon another journey to the eastern countries, but was

seized with a fever in the Crimea, and died in 1790.

Now, is not this a noble example? How much more does Howard deserve the name of a great man than Alexander, Cesar, or Bonaparte! I wish you to think of these things, and earnestly to pray that you may be disposed to imitate such a course of life.

Your affectionate brother,

JAMES.

LETTER XX.

SECRET PRAYER.

My dear brother,—The subject about which I intend now to address you is so important, that I might write many letters upon it. It is that of *secret prayer*. I trust that you suffer no day to pass, in which you do not pray to God in some secret place.

We are nowhere taught in the Bible how often we ought to pray. It is indeed said that we must *pray without ceasing*, that is, that we should all the time be in a fit state of mind for prayer; also that we should habitually observe regular seasons for prayer, and besides, that we should very often offer up petitions in our minds, while we are about our common employments

Almost all Christians have agreed that it is proper to pray to God every morning and every evening. There is a great advantage in having a set time for secret prayer. You have often heard it said, *that what is left to be done at any time, is commonly done at no time.* This is true. If you rise in the morning, and put off your devotions until you feel more in the spirit for them, it is likely that you will be less and less in the right temper. When you become hurried with your studies, your work, or your play, you will be less disposed to pray than when you first arose. Besides, if you have a fixed hour for your private devotions, whenever the hour comes, you will be put in mind of your duty. You know that in a family where the meals are served up at regular hours, every one is reminded of breakfast or dinner whenever the hour arrives.

In a late letter, I spoke to you of

the importance of forming proper habits. Now it is one great use of having a stated hour for prayer, that you thus acquire the habit of going into your closet for devotion at a certain time. I remember that I used to have a particular hour for taking a walk in the morning. This became quite a habit with me. Whenever the hour came, I always set out upon my walk, and I used to feel quite unpleasantly when any thing happened to prevent it. So it will be if you set a time every morning and evening for being alone to pray.

It is good also to have a particular *place*, where this is possible. If we go into a room where we have always been accustomed to play and be merry, it will make us think of these things, and we shall be cheerful. If we go into a room where we have seen a person die, it will make us very solemn. What is the reason of this?

It is because one thing brings the other into our mind. It is called by philosophers the *association of ideas*. On this account, almost every one feels solemn on going into a house of worship. And in the same way, if you have a particular place where you go to read the Scriptures and pray, you will feel serious whenever you go into it. If it is only a particular corner of your chamber, it will answer a good purpose.

The best time for prayer is early in the morning. As soon as you have washed and dressed yourself, you should go by yourself and engage in devotion. At this hour the mind is fresh and cheerful, and we should give the best hours to God. You are then free from interruptions, and the bustle and hurry of the day have not yet begun. You will naturally be led to think of the goodness of God in preserving you through all

the dangers of the night, and it will be highly proper for you to ask his blessing upon the whole day.

The proper time for evening prayer is when the business of the day is generally over. But you must not fix on too late an hour, for in that case you will often be heavy and drowsy, and will hurry through the duty, or perform it in a careless manner. Some thoughtless boys put off their prayers until they have got into bed, and then they pretend to repeat something in the way of devotion. They are afraid to neglect the duty entirely, but they go about it in so slothful a way, that they often fall asleep before they are through their prayers. This is a wicked practice. It is a temptation by which Satan leads many young persons to leave off secret prayer altogether. At public schools, where several boys lodge in the same room, they are often

tempted to this neglect. They are ashamed to let their playmates see that they serve God; and this is a dreadful sin. In such a case, it would be a good plan to take an hour before bed-time, in which you could retire to some private place.

Remember that the great thing in prayer is to have the heart right. The words which you utter with your lips are of less importance. You might say over the best prayer that ever was written, and yet if your heart was not in it, you would only be mocking God. Praying is asking. It is asking for what you desire. Now if there is no desire, there is no prayer. If you ask God for things which you do not wish to receive, you are trifling with him, and this is most displeasing to him. Remember also that prayer is heard only for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, when you pray, you must

have faith in him, or your prayers will not be acceptable. Whenever you kneel down to pray, think what a solemn thing it is that you are about to do. You are going to speak to Almighty God! O, my dear brother, think of this, and you will no longer hurry through your prayers, as if they were some idle tale. Remember the old saying, which is most true: *Praying will make us leave off sinning, or sinning will make us leave off praying.*

Your affectionate brother,

JAMES.

LETTER XXI.

THE GREAT CONCERN.

My dear brother,—There are many things to which it is right for you to attend, but there is one thing which is important above all others. It is the *salvation of your soul*. Learning is good, but if you should get all the learning possible, it would only make you miserable, if you were cast into hell. And so it is with every thing else. If, through the blessing of God, you finally get to heaven, it will be infinitely well with you, even if you have been poor and despised, wretched and ignorant.

You know I do not wish you to neglect your learning, but I am very much afraid you will neglect eternal things. This is the true learning,

this is eternal life, to know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent. This is what the Bible calls wisdom. A man may be very learned in worldly things and yet be very foolish. What can be more foolish than to give away eternal joys to gain a few years of pleasure? This is what many worldly-wise men are doing. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. A child who is taught of God knows more about divine things than Socrates did.

I am afraid, my dear brother, that you do not think of this as much as you should. I fear that you push away the thought, even when it comes into your mind. This is very dangerous. You may thus harden your heart till it becomes altogether unfeeling. When you turn away your thoughts from religion, you are turning away from God and from

Christ. If the Lord Jesus Christ were to come into the house where you live, and show himself to you, just as he did to his disciples at the sea of Tiberias, (John xxi.,) and say to you, *Follow thou me*, what would you do?

Perhaps you would say, "I cannot follow Christ now, because I am too young." Many boys say so in their hearts. Christ says to them, *Follow me*, just as really as if he were to come into your school-room, and take you by the hand, and utter these words. Perhaps you would say, "I cannot follow Christ now, because the boys would laugh at me." Ah, how wicked, how ungrateful is this! The wicked may indeed laugh at you if you follow Jesus. So they laughed at the disciples in old times. Do you think that the early Christians were free from ridicule? Not

at all. They were mocked and scorned wherever they went; and not merely mocked and scorned, they were pursued, imprisoned, and put to death. You cannot follow Christ unless you are willing to suffer for his sake. Are you afraid of the laughter of silly boys and wicked men? Think of the blessed Redeemer. He was not afraid of this, but underwent it, and a thousand times more, to save sinners. People laughed at *him*. They ridiculed him as the *carpenter's son*. They said he was a Samaritan, which was a name of reproach among the Jews. They said he was *mad*. They charged him with having a *devil*. Even when he was working miracles, *they laughed him to scorn*. Yes, and when he was hanging on the cross, in an agony, at the point of death, they wagged their heads at him, and

made sport of his blood and suffering. Think of this. This is what Jesus has done for us. And now he says, *Follow me*. He seems to show you his pierced hands and feet, and to say, "My child, I have borne all this for sinners, and now all I ask is, that you should follow me."

It is your duty, my dear brother, to give your heart to God *now*; to believe *now*. There is no good reason for waiting. All the reasons which come into your mind to make you delay, are wicked, selfish, rebellious excuses. *Now* is the accepted time. To-morrow it will be as hard to believe in Christ as it is to-day; perhaps much harder, because, as I said, the heart becomes insensible when persons continue to resist the Holy Spirit.

I pray that God would send his Holy Spirit down from heaven, to

create a clean heart in you, and to renew you. Your carnal heart is enmity against God, and this is the reason why it is not subject to the law of God. Carnal hearts cannot be subject to the law. And though Christ is every day inviting you, yet you will not come unto him, that you may have life. If you grow up in this state of blindness and impenitence, there is reason to fear that you will become so much the servant of sin, that the evil one will lead you into some open crime. There is a blessed hope of everlasting life given to true believers, and this is what I wish you to enjoy. Perhaps you may not live to be a man. Death sometimes approaches very suddenly. You saw the grave of a little boy not long ago. He was as healthy, a few weeks before his death, as you now are. He had no thought that he was

about to die, and now he is in eternity!

Come now, my dear brother, and join with me and your Christian friends in seeking the Lord and calling upon him. "Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near." Make this the chief business of every day, to please God. When you rise in the morning, let your first thought be that you have a soul to save. All the day long, let the salvation of your soul be your principal concern. Other things may wait, without any danger. Your plays and recreations may wait; for if you live, you can attend to them as well hereafter. Your studies may wait, for a few days lost may be regained by diligence. But the *soul's concerns* cannot wait. While you are waiting, death is coming. Death is nearer to you than when you began to read

this letter. While you are putting off religion until another day, you are so much nearer to the day of judgment. You are loitering and lingering; but time does not linger. And before the day comes on which you mean to begin to seek the Lord's face, your soul may be tormented. O, my dear brother, attend speedily to these warnings. All will be well with you as soon as you are persuaded to follow Christ. Make choice of him—look to him—come to him—receive him—believe on him—and you will at once have the privilege of being one of the sons of God.*

Go to some quiet, private place, and tell the Lord in prayer, how great a sinner you have been, and mourn over your sin, and cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" For

* Isa. xlv. 22. John i. 12; iii. 16. 18. 36. Acts xvi. 31. Matt. xi. 28. John vi. 35.

“if thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find him; if thou seek him with all thy heart, and with all thy soul.” Deut. iv. 29. May God abundantly bless you!

Your affectionate brother,

JAMES

THE END.





